3 1761 11765374 1


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
University of Toronto

https://archive.org/details/31761117653741

Publications

Industry Canada Industrie Canada

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

LIBRARY
JUL 0 4 2005
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

A1
ST
A17

June 2000

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 9

COMMON LOOK & FEEL

Common Look and Feel is the name of a new Treasury Board of Canada standard that will ensure that all Government of Canada Web sites and electronic services will be clearly identifiable as such, by the end of 2002. It will have the effect of standardizing and harmonizing such things as Web and e-mail addresses, departmental identification, and especially the general appearance and navigational features of federal Web sites. The standard is comprised of three major sections relating to federal identity policy, official languages policy, and universal accessibility requirements.

The universal accessibility requirements state that Government of Canada Web sites shall address all priority one and two checkpoints contained in the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (**http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT**). This corresponds to "Double-A" compliance with the W3C's recommendations.

A number of toolkits are available to help government Webmasters and page-designers meet the requirements of Common Look and Feel standard. For federal identity and official languages, these include sample page layouts, the text of standard and common messages (like copyright, disclaimers, etc.), libraries of standard images (official logos, identifiers, navigation buttons, etc.), and guidelines for typography. The accessibility toolkit includes hints, tips and sample code that can be used or adapted for use to improve the accessibility of Web sites. The Web site Accessibility Testing Service (WATS) is another tool provided by Treasury Board to help government Web masters identify and correct accessibility problems in their designs.

WATS

In the last edition of Accessible News we reported that the Treasury Board of Canada had begun a pilot project to help the Government of Canada ensure that their new Web site designs are accessible to persons with disabilities. The service is called the Web site Accessibility Testing Service or WATS for short.

The pilot project was completed at the end of March 2000.

We are pleased to announce that the Treasury Board has renewed the project for the 2000/2001 fiscal year. The Public Service Commission has graciously agreed to continue hosting the service in its Enabling Resource Centre in downtown Ottawa. A team from Starling Access Services, an accessible-Web consulting firm, performs the evaluations.

WATS allows Government of Canada Web masters and page designers to see firsthand how persons with disabilities experience their sites. This will help the government meet its goal to connect all Canadians who want to be connected to the Information Highway.

For more information, contact the Treasury Board of Canada (Deirdre Bagot, Email: **bagot.deirdre@tbs-sct.gc.ca**), or Starling Access Services (Chuck Letourneau, E-mail: **info@starlingweb.com**)

ADVISORY COMMITTEES: SHARING INFORMATION WITH OUR COLLEAGUES

The Advisory Committee on Assistive Devices (ACAD) has been in operation since the early 1990s, when it was established to advise the Minister of Communications. This dynamic group of individuals, many of whom have disabilities, advises the Minister of Industry on the best ways to ensure that all Canadians have access to the information and services they need and makes recommendations on the programs, policies and services of the Department and its Portfolio agencies. This covers everything from computer input and output to the electronic delivery of information and services. ADIO provides secretariat support to this committee.

In order to effectively share information on what is going on elsewhere in the government, the Departments of Transport, Human Resources Development and the National Library all have observers at the ACAD meetings and Industry Canada has an observer who attends meetings of the Minister of Transport's Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT). ACAT advises on federally-regulated aspects of travel, including air, rail and marine travel and intercity bus systems that operate in more than one province.

2000 NATIONAL IWAY AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Dr. Charles Laszlo is the recipient of the 2000 National IWAY Award for Adaptive Technologies. This is one of five awards developed by CANARIE Inc. (Canada's Advanced Internet Development Organization) to recognize Canada's top innovators, educators and entrepreneurs in information technology. The awards were presented at a ceremony on April 3.

Dr. Laszlo, who is the Chairman of Assistive Listening Device Systems Inc.(ALDS) in Richmond, B.C., was honoured for his innovative work in the development of adaptive technology for hard of hearing persons. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Institute for Hearing Accessibility Research at the University of British Columbia. With his graduate students at the Institute, he set up ALDS Inc. in 1991 to expedite the transfer of their research to the manufacturing stage.

In the course of his career, Dr. Laszlo has been responsible for the development of some very impressive leading edge technologies, including a portable infrared communication system for one-on-one conversations, an electronic note-taking system which is used in classroom settings, a training device to help hearing aids wearers to use the telephone and most recently, FlightSound, the world's first "airworthiness certified" infrared communication system for in-flight use by hard of hearing travellers.

Dr. Laszlo has been a leader in efforts to standardize telephone magnetic emissions for coupling telephones and for the establishment of government regulations which ensure access to telephone services for all hard of hearing Canadians. He is a member of ACAD as well as a member of the Order of Canada.

The Adaptive Technologies award is sponsored each year by Newbridge Networks Corporation to honour those people who provide leadership in the promotion, development and enhancement of the information society. The other IWAY Award winners this year were: Antoine Paquin, CEO of Philsar Semiconductor (New Technology Development award), Murray Goldberg, President of WebCT Canada (Application of Technology award), LiveWires Design Ltd. (Community Service award) and John Roth, Vice Chairman and CEO of Nortel Networks (Public Leadership award.)

Although the IWAY Awards are in their fifth year, this is only the third year that the Adaptive Technologies award has been in existence. The previous winners of this award were Randy Marsden, then-President and CEO of Madenta and now principal of Madentec, who was honoured in 1998 for the development of the Tracker alternative pointing device system for people with severe mobility disabilities and Sharlyn Ayotte, President and CEO of T-Base Communications, who was honoured last year for the development of InfoTouch, an electronic information delivery system that provides affordable alternative format documents on an as-needed basis.

CSA UPDATE

The Barrier Free Design Committee of the Canadian Standards Association continues to work on updating the standards for accessible buildings. This is the first complete overhaul of the standard, B651, since its publication in 1995. The standard includes information on areas such as the widths needed in hallways to allow wheelchair access, how to ensure items that stick out from walls such as signs, payphones, water fountains etc. are detectable by a white cane user and how to make sure stairways and ramps are safe.

The B651 Committee is also the parent of the subcommittee currently putting the finishing touches on the proposed standard for accessible Automated Banking Machines (ABMs). It is expected that the ABM standard will go to balloting by the voting members of the Barrier Free Committee towards the end of June and be published this fall.

ICTA-NA

The International Commission on Technology and Accessibility, or ICTA, is one of six commissions under the auspices of Rehabilitation International, an international not for profit non-governmental organization. ICTA is concerned with all areas of accessibility: primarily habitat, transportation, and communications in developing countries, and access to high technology and employment in developed countries.

While ICTA has enjoyed (and continues to enjoy) strong and active

representation in Europe, Asia and Africa, the North American milieu has been largely ignored – until now. ICTA recognizes that North America supports a well-developed and extensive communications and information infrastructure. However, there are many areas in business, the community, and government where access to the rapidly advancing technologies has not necessarily kept pace with the ideal.

ICTA-Global recently constituted a North American chapter whose aim is to help decision makers and policy planners in business, governments and the community to identify barriers and solutions in the areas of technology and accessibility.

In the short term, ICTA-NA will focus on raising awareness of industry leaders and business and industry associations on the issues, technologies and solutions available to them - especially with respect to the hiring, accommodation, retention and advancement of people with disabilities in technology rich work places.

ICTA-NA membership is comprised of a volunteer network of experts in various fields, mostly relating to technology and accessibility, including rehabilitation engineers, accommodation service specialists, assistive technology researchers and developers, employment equity policy analysts, access standards developers and others from governments, academia, the private sector and the community, in both Canada and the United States. ICTA-NA is actively seeking membership from across the continent. If you feel you have some expertise to offer, ICTA would be pleased to hear from you. Time commitment is expected to be minimal, and most of the organization's business will be carried out via e-mail or on the Web.

For more information, or to join ICTA-NA, please contact:
Chuck Letourneau, President, ICTA-NA, e-mail: **icta@starlingweb.com**, or
Carl Raskin, Vice President, ICTA-NA, e-mail: **craskin@storm.ca**.

A Web site for the North American chapter is under development and can be reached through the parent site: **http://www.ictaglobal.org/**.

ICTA-NA is also pleased to announce the "6th International Congress on Serving Children with Disabilities in the Community", taking place October 23-25, 2000 in Edmonton, Alberta. For more information, please contact: Janis Douglas, Coordinator 6th Congress Secretariat, c/o The Canadian Association for Community Living, Kinsmen Bldg., York University, 4700 Keele St., Toronto, Ontario CANADA M3J 1P3 Tel: 416-661-9611, TTY: 416-661-2023, Fax: 416 661-5701, Email: **childcongress@cacl.ca**

NEADS YEAR 2000 CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) will be holding its seventh National Conference titled "Networking, Educating, Advocating: Delivering Success in the New Millennium," at the Delta Hotel in Ottawa from November 10 - 12, 2000. This conference is the only one of its kind in Canada that brings together college and university students with disabilities, personnel who provide disability-related services in higher education and government officials, among others. This year, a higher than normal attendance is expected, including participants from outside Canada. NEADS is seeking companies or organizations who would be interested in partnering with the Association as sponsors or exhibitors.

For more information, contact:

Jennison Asuncion, Vice President Internal & Year 2000 Conference Chair
Tel: (514) 931-8731 #3594
E-Mail: **jennison.asuncion@neads.ca** or
Frank Smith, National Coordinator
Tel: (613) 526-8008
E-Mail: **frank.smith@neads.ca**

The NEADS Web site (**www.neads.ca**) has the latest details on the conference.

NEWS BITS

On March 20, Industry Canada's new Deputy Minister, V. Peter Harder, took over the reins from Kevin Lynch. Mr. Harder comes to us from the Treasury Board and Mr. Lynch has moved over to the Department of Finance. Mr. Harder has shown his interest in disability issues as he was the person who commissioned the Access for ALL through Technology Task Force (Lyrette) that the ADIO was involved in over the winter.

Two resource guides are available on the CAP Web site: they are "What Can You Do to Make Your CAP Site Accessible", which is at **http://cap.ic.gc.ca/english/barriers.html** and the "Assistive Technology for CAP Sites Resource Guide" at **http://cap.ic.gc.ca/english/contents.html** .

HRDC is leading two initiatives in support of the Federal Disability Agenda, one is the development of Access and Inclusion Lenses and the other is working on the development of an accountability framework and reporting format. More information on these activities can be found by contacting the HRDC Office for Disability Issues. Their Web address is:
http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hrib/sdd-dds/sdd/odi/ .

Efforts are underway to ensure that Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Research are properly supported in Canada. A group of Rehab Engineers met in Ottawa in May to discuss this issue and will be developing an action plan over the summer. We will be able to report more in the fall issue. If you want more info, feel free to contact the ADIO.

The University of Toronto is offering a course called "Current Topics in Assistive Technology" in the Undergraduate Department of Occupational Therapy and a similar course in the Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Science. Mary Frances Laughton was invited to participate as a leader in both courses and was thrilled to meet some of the industry leaders of the future. She is looking for other similar programmes where she could meet more students.

Remember that you can find information on upcoming Disability and Seniors Conferences at **http://www.starlingweb.com/adp/as00022e.htm** .

The annual meeting of the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative Steering Committee (now renamed to be Advisory Committee) was held in Boston on May 2-3. The major discussion elements were how to respond to Section 508 of the US Rehabilitation Act and how to ensure that the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines are used and usable.

For the first time with Issue 8, this newsletter is part of the Depository Services Program. The is a programme of the Federal Government that places government information in selected libraries to ensure that all Canadians have free access to the information products of their government.

This year's winner of the CNIB Library For the Blind Dr. Dayton M. Forman Memorial Award is the Calgary Public Library, which was honoured for its outstanding work in providing alternative format materials for its blind and print-handicapped customers and for its community outreach services.

Watch our Web site for the announcement of the Accessible Procurement Toolkit going live. It should happen within the next 6 weeks.

Check out the Canadian Transportation Agency's web site to find out more about their traveller's survey. It can be found at **http://www.cta-otc.gc.ca/** .

To follow what is going on with regard to disability issues in Parliament, check the site of the Sub-committee on the Status of Persons with Disabilities of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities at **http://www.parl.gc.ca/36/1/parlbus/commbus/house/CommitteeMain.asp?Language=E&CommitteeID=104** .

Mary Frances was featured in the latest issue (Volume 2 Number 1) of "A Day in the Life of the Public Service of Canada" a publication of the Leadership Network. It can be found on the web at: **http://leadership.gc.ca** .

Microsoft announced a licensing arrangement on June 1 with Labyrinten Data AB and isSound that will enable text-to-audio synchronization of eBooks created for the Microsoft Reader format. Publishers will be able to add additional information to their eBooks that will enable consumers to either read text on screen or listen to it through sound output. This will make more reading material available to blind and print-handicapped consumers. A portion of the revenues

generated from the licensing deal will be donated to the DAISY Consortium, the international nonprofit group dedicated to defining a standard for digital talking books. Both VisuAide and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind are active participants in DAISY.

FPSJAN, the Federal Public Service Job Accomodation Network for Employees with Disabilities is creating some buzz throughout the Government. The network was launched at the beginning of February by the Treasury Board and includes a number of Federal partners who come together to facilitate greater access to advice, policy interpretation and services both for employees with disabilities and for managers wanting to accommodate more effectively employees with disabilities in the workplace. At its June 8 meeting partners heard from HRDC that e-ACT, an Adaptive Computer Technology (ACT) information portal will open soon at **www.act.gc.ca** and that the Canadian International Development Agency's ACT Centre is expected to open in a few weeks' time. Further details on FPSJAN will be featured in the next issue of Accessible News.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

WHERE TO FIND US

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Mary Frances Laughton or Deb Finn
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4316 or 613-990-4297 fax: 613-998-5923
Internet: **laughton@crc.ca** or **finn.deb@ic.gc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Industry Canada Industrie Canada

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO) December 2000

CA1
IST
- A17

ACCESSIBLE NEWS Nº 10

CHECK OUT STRATEGIS' NEW LOOK

Roll-out of Strategis 2001, Industry Canada's business and consumer site, began on Friday, December 1. The site continues to provide a wealth of information and useful contacts and now it conforms with the Government of Canada's Common Look and Feel policy. Take a look at Strategis and you will find it easier to use.

While you are visiting the site, we recommend that you take a look at the Canadian Company Capabilities (CCC) database, which you will find under the section on "Company Directories". If you are one of the many companies already registered on CCC, check to see if your listing needs any updating; if your company is not on CCC, take a look at your competitors and see why using this free marketing tool makes so much sense. Companies registering themselves on CCC for the first time: please let us know, so that we can make sure you are included in ADIO's list of AD companies in the CCC database.

The URL for Strategis remains the same, **http://strategis.ic.gc.ca** . Only the look and ease of use has been changed — for the better!

TASK FORCE SAYS CANADA MUST DO MORE TO SUPPORT ALTERNATE FORMAT PRODUCTION

Canada must join its OECD colleagues in supporting the production of information in formats accessible to persons with print disabilities: large print, braille and audio. That's the unequivocal message contained in a report received October 31 by the National Librarian of Canada, Roch Carrier, and Euclid Herie, President and CEO of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

The report is "Fulfilling the Promise: the Report of the Task Force on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians". The Task Force was sponsored by the National Librarian and the President of CNIB and chaired by the Honourable

Justice James K. Hugessen. Over the summer, the Task Force heard testimony from more than 100 citizens from 10 provinces and one territory. ADIO provided secretariat support to the Task Force and worked with National Library personnel to prepare the report.

The Task Force recommendations are aimed at addressing the needs of the more than three million Canadians who have a print disability that makes it impossible for them to use regular print materials like the daily newspaper, a menu or a Grade 12 biology text. This is a population that is currently underserved in Canada, the only G7 country whose federal government does not provide any funding to support the production of alternate format materials.

As Baby Boomers age, the need for and interest in large print materials has begun to grow. So too has the demand for auio books, a demand that is rapidy moving beyond the print-disabled population to gain popularity among groups such as motorists who use the drive to and from work to listen to the latest best-seller. There is a tremendous market potential for the production of alternate format information and to date, this is a market that has been largely untapped in Canada. Some of the recommendations in the Task Force report are aimed at making alternate format production more affordable, efficient and attractive to Canadian publishers.

"Working with the National Librarian, I am optimistic that finally we will bridge the information gap faced daily by blind and other print disabled persons", Mr. Herie said. Mr. Carrier echoed this sentiment, saying, "I will look forward to reading the report and to working together with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and all of our partners to ensure equitable access to information for all Canadians."

The Task Force report is available in alternate formats and in both official languages. It is also posted to the Task Force Web site at **www.nlc-bnc.ca/accessinfo** .



TRADE TEAM CANADA ICT NEWSLETTER

Trade Team Canada Information and Communications Technologies is pleased to provide you this newsletter, updating you on the activities and key market intelligence now available to you. The International Activities database serves two purposes. It is used within Industry Canada to identify both international and domestic activities related to "Business Development", "Investment", "Market Access - Standards", "Market Access - Policy", and "conference attendance" that either involve Senior Management or should be flagged for senior management's attention. Now it has evolved to allow us to promote these activities and recruit and register firms for these events on-line. While the system lists all countries, currently only the Industry Canada/DFAIT activities related to the ICT Trade Team Canada "priority countries" have been entered. These activities tend to be the largest ICT event (general) within these priority countries.
URL:
http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/cgi-bin/sc_mangb/evnt/program/viewEvents.pl?lang=0

"Marketing and Financing Promotion Opportunities" as well as "Market Intelligence" can be accessed for the Canadian Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) Sector at the Trade Team Canada Information and Communications Technologies **website: http://www.ttcinfotech.com.**

WHAT STANDARD ARE YOU USING?

A comprehensive comparative study of best practices in universal design has just been published in Canada. The report was commissioned by Agriculture Canada, in preparation for the construction of a new headquarters building in Ottawa.

The report examined accessibility codes and standards in Japan, Norway, China, Australia, New Zealand, the U. S. and Canada. After careful analysis of the technical specifications, a "Best Practice" was identified.

Technical specifications varied considerably. The clear width requirements for a doorway varied from 800 mm (National Building Code of Canada)- 810 mm (CSA-CAN B651) - 815mm (ADA) - 850 mm (Fiji) and individual washroom

dimensions varied from 1700 x 1700 mm (CSA) to 1600 x 2000 mm (Australia). The report also includes photographs and drawings of best practices. The report is available in alternate formats.

The report which was prepared by **Betty Dion Enterprises Ltd** in partnership with the Canadian Institute on Barrier-Free Design is available for the cost of printing and mailing. The Public Service Commission is distributing the report within the federal government. This report will be of interest to building owners, consumer advocates and various levels of governments.

For more information about the best practices report, contact Betty Dion at:
Betty Dion Enterprises Ltd.
104-119 Ross Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario
K1Y 0N6

(613) 725-0566 (Voice, TDD)
(613) 725-5195 (Fax)
email: bettydion@intranet.ca

NEW HANDBOOK TEACHES LIFE SKILLS TO YOUTH WITH DISABITIES

The Canadian Abilities Foundation (CAF) has just published "On My Own: A Resource Guide for Living Independently", a handbook to help young people with disabilities make the transition to living on their own.

The handbook is divided into ten chapters, covering such topics as how to determine if you are ready to go it alone, things to do to plan the move, looking after yourself and your new home, getting along with others, dealing with social occasions and looking for a job. Along the way, there's plenty of sound advice provided by people with disabilities who have already gone through the experience of making an independent life for themselves.

Gillian Lynne-Davies, the Manager for Project Development at the CAF said the development of the handbook was a labour of love that came together over the course of a couple of years. Research for the book was funded largely by a

donation from Laidlaw, with the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation picking up the tab for printing.

The CAF is a non-profit organization with a mission to provide information, inspiration and opportunity to people with disabilities. The Foundation publishes many different disability-related publications, including "Abilities — Canada's Lifestyle Magazine for People with Disabilities" (**www.abilities.ca**).

"On My Own" is available for $15 from the Canadian Abilities Foundation, 489 College St., Suite 501 Toronto, Ontario M6G 1A5.

NEWS BITS

The Treasury Board announced the public launch of the Common Look and Feel standard on June 29. You will find the standard at **www.cio-dpi.gc.ca/clf-upe/a_e.asp** . As we reported in our last newsletter, the standard is comprised of three major sections relating to federal identity policy, official languages policy and universal accessibility requirements. The access requirements state that Government of Canada Web sites shall address all Priority One and Two checkpoints containd in the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (**www.w3.org/wai**).

Control Advancements Inc. changed its name to Betacom Corporation this summer. As Control Advancement's businesses have matured and been divested, the company's focus has been re-directed to investment in the established business operations of Betacom, the acquisition of which was completed in December 1999. Since 1981, Betacom has specialized in the development, distribution, marketing and sale of products, services and technologies for people with disabilities, especially those who or blind or partially sighted. As a result of the name change, the Canadian Dealing Network has approved quotation of Betacom's common shares under the symbol "EYEE".

CSA International will soon release its "Design for Aging Guidelines" for public comment. ADIO staff have been involved in the CSA Technical Committee preparing these guidelines as well as serving on the Standards Council of Canada's Advisory Group to ISO/COPOLCO which has prepared draft "Guidelines for standardization to address the needs of older persons and people

with disabilities". For more information on these guidelines, contact Ian Brodie at CSA International at **ian.brodie@csa-international.org** .

CSA International members have approved the draft standard B651.1, "Barrier-Free Design for Automated Banking Machines", which can now be published as a national standard.

The Senate of Canada hosted the First Annual Canadian Celebration of Persons with Disabilities with a number of events in October and November. An information fair, showcasing the various programs and services offered by the private and public sectors designed to raise awareness, increase knowledge and integrate the talents of the disability community was held on Parlaiment Hill, October 26 and 27. Industry Canada's Information Highway Applications Branch (IHAB) demonstrated its innovative Web-4-All system at this venue. A Partnership Day where Senators and employees were partnered with a person with a disability to share mutual experiences took place on November 1. Last but not least, a dinner was held on the evening of November 14 to recognize the accomplishments of individuals and private and public sector organizations that are "Making a Difference" in the lives of people with disabilities.

On November 24, Kay Stanley, Treasury Board Secretariat Assistant Secretary for Employment Equity and Jill Velenosi, Deputy CIO, released the action plan resulting from the recommendations of the Access for All Through Technology Task Force tabled by chair Jacques Lyrette on March 31, 2000. For more information on the action plan, you can contact Yves Séguin at TBS at seguin.yves@tbs-sct.gc.ca or 613-952-2864.

ADIO staff are working with the Treasury Board Federated Architecture Team on the development of accessibility standards as the government moves towards its goal of Government on Line. Accessibility was selected to be one of the top level domains for this work.

Gerry Turcotte, President of Industry Canada's Communications Research Centre, has been named Disability Champion for the department. He represents Industry Canada on the ADM Steering Committee of the Federal Disability Agenda, the Interdepartmental Employment Equity ADM Champion Committee and is the advisor to the Industry Canada Disability Employee Committee.

Gary Birch, Chair of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Assistive Devices (ACAD), has been invited to participate as an ex-officio member of a committee established to assess the information technology needs of the voluntary sector. This committee has been set up as part of the larger IM/IT Joint Table that was instituted under the government's "Parterning with the Voluntary Sector for the Benefit of Canadians" initiative. The IT needs committee is chaired by Lisanne Lacroix, IHAB's Deputy Directory General.

ADIO has launched its Accessible Procurement Toolkits site to assist employees with disabilities and managers buy accessible goods and services. To check out the toolkits, visit the ADIO Web site at **strategis.ic.gc.ca/adio** .

Remember that you can find a list of disability or aging conferences (past and upcoming) with contact information and websites (where available) from the ADIO home page. We welcome any additions to the list.

OUR WEB SITE

Our Web site can be found at **strategis.ic.g.ca/adio** . At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

WHERE TO FIND US

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Mary Frances Laughton or Deb Finn
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4316 or 613-990-4297 fax: 613-998-5923
Internet: **laughton@crc.ca** or **finn.deb@ic.gc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Industry Canada Industrie Canada

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

October 2001

CA1
IST
- A17

ACCESSIBLE NEWS Nº 12

CANADA'S ELECTRONICS MANUFACTURING SERVICES INDUSTRY: AN UNTAPPED RESOURCE FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES?

- by Sandeep Mathur, with input from Deb. Finn

Companies in the Electronics Manufacturing Services (EMS) sector undertake the manufacturing function for Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs). The work traditionally has included printed circuit board sub-assembly and box build work. EMS companies are now offering "cradle to grave" services where they work with OEMs from the initial design phase of a product through to the provision of after-market support.

For many assistive technology (AT) developers in Canada, the most difficult step in product development is turning their prototype into production and onto retailers' and distributors' shelves. EMS companies may be the answer to an AT developer's prayers. These companies have the capability to produce goods ranging from low end consumer products to high end communications and military equipment.

There are over 50 firms in the EMS sector that generated an estimated $8 billion in revenue in 2000. The industry employs over 15,000 across Canada, mainly in Ontario, Quebec and Alberta. The Canadian industry strengths lie in low-volume, high mix, high complexity product assembly and new product introduction, thus making EMS companies an attractive prospect for small AT companies without the capital to establish their own manufacturing facilities. What's more, Canadian EMS companies are looking at domestic expansion opportunities.

Most EMS firms are focussing on the high growth ICT sectors such as telecommunications and wireless. Some have carved out their niche in automotive, defence and aerospace, and medical electronics. Could AT be the next sector to which EMS firms turn their attention?

EMS firms enjoy economies of scale, possess expertise in supply chain management, and have capability to quickly ramp up production. Hence these firms may be well positioned to not only provide guidance to AT developers in finding mainstream applications for their products but also to quickly bring these products to market at competitive prices.

A profile of the EMS industry is on Industry Canada's Strategis Web site at **http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/SSG/it05793e.html** and a directory of EMS firms will be put up on the site in the near future.

CNIB AWARDS 2001 WINSTON GORDON AWARD TO TECSO INC.

Montreal company TECSO Inc. is this year's recipient of the prestigious Winston Gordon Award, which is given annually by the CNIB. At an award ceremony in Montreal on August 30, TECSO President and CEO Catherine Geoffroy received the prize of a 24-carat gold medal and a cash award of $15,000. The company was recognized for its innovative line of interactive tutorials for Microsoft applications. These tutorials are the first in the world to be designed specifically for people who are blind or visually impaired.

The Award was established in 1988 and first bestowed the following year. It is given in honour of the blind industrialist and entrepreneur, Winston Gordon, who founded the Steel Fabricating and Welding Company Limited in Hamilton, Ontario in the 1930s and later went on to serve on the CNIB's Advisory Board for more than 25 years. Companies and organizations who receive the Award are recognized for the development of technological devices and/or the application of certain technologies or techniques that provide useful benefits to blind and visually impaired persons. Most of the Award's recipients to date have been from outside Canada and have been acknowledged as industry or advocacy leaders in their fields. In addition to being only the second Canadian company to receive the Winston Gordon Award (the other was SynthaVoice in 1996), this is the first time that a company headed by a woman has been so honoured.

TECSO was spun off from the Department of Communications/Industry Canada's Centre for Information Technologies Innovation (CITI) when CITI was being wound up during the Federal Government's downsizing exercise in the early 1990s. It has been successful in developing a variety of products that help

LIBRARY
JUN 14 2002
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

blind or visually impaired people navigate Windows environments and the Internet by means of tactile and/or auditory feedback. This includes the Listening to Windows 95 and 98 series, Listening to the Internet and Listening to Word. The tutorials are sold in more than 10 countries worldwide and are available in English, French, Italian and German.

Ms. Geoffroy stated that "we hope that this award will shed more light on the issue of accessibility and that government agencies, employers, schools, rehabilitation and training centres, as well as users themselves will better understand the importance of training to improve access to education, employment, and leisure pursuits."

To find out more about TECSO's innovative products, visit their Web site at **www.TECSO.ca**

GOLD MEDAL AWARDED BY CCPE

Dr. Charles Laszlo was awarded the Gold Medal by the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers at their annual meeting in St. Andrews, New Brunswick on May 26. This is the highest honour given by the Council. Dr. Laszlo is the founder of the Institute for Hearing Accessibility Research, at the University of British Columbia, where he is now Professor Emeritus in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. In 1991, he and a group of his graduate students set up a company, Assistive Listening Device Systems which has been successful in turning the Institute's research into usable products. Dr. Laszlo is also a member of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Assistive Devices and Persons with Disabilities.

FEDERAL ELEVATOR EXPANDS ITS FACILITIES

Brampton, Ontario-based Federal Elevator, a leading manufacturer of residence elevators, handicap lifts and LULA (Limited Usage, Limited Access) elevators announced a large expansion of its manufacturing facilities in August. The expansion was needed to accommodate the increased demand for the 100% Canadian-owned company's products.

Richard Piatti explained that over the past five years his company has seen a steadily growing market for elevators and lifts. He estimates that throughout the accessible elevator sector, there has been a 40% increase in installations in North America since the mid-1990s. One reason for this increase is the aging population.

"Fifteen years ago", he said, "you did not see a lot of elevators installed in single family dwellings. They were seen as something that would reduce the resale value of a house. Now, it's seen more and more as a selling feature. People are discovering that to sell their house and to move into a place that is accessible can cost them more than if they stay in their home and install an elevator or a lift. You can install an elevator in a home", he noted, "for as little as $20,000."

A factor in the growing market for accessible elevators in public buildings and residences other than single family units has been the introduction of such legislation as the Americans with Disabilities Act, which has been instrumental in increasing the demand in the US. An increase in installations has also been seen in Canada, where more and more schools, courthouses, community centres and other public use buildings are also working to better meet the access needs of people with mobility disabilities. Over the past three years, more public money has become available for the installation of accessible elevators and lifts, a welcome turn of events after a period in the mid-90s where such funds were nearly non-existent in Canada. Mr. Piatti said that Ontario has been a leader in such installations, thanks to the building of new schools and the renovations being carried out in existing schools across the province. Other provinces where similar increases in installations are going on are Manitoba, B.C. and Newfoundland.

Mr. Piatti proudly points out that Canada has led the way in North America in the introduction of lifts for people with mobility disabilities and in the development of standards governing them. After the UN declared 1980 the International Year of Disabled Persons, the world's first standard on lifts was developed by the Canadian Standards Association. This standard, B355, "Lifts for Persons With Physical Disabilities" is still in use and was updated as recently as last year. Other standards have also been developed to cover other types of elevators and lift devices for people with disabilities and the CSA's B44 "Safety Code for Elevators" includes sections on wheelchair accessible elevators. The

Canadian standard established for LULA elevators is among those that have been harmonized with its American counterpart, an important point, when you consider that Federal Elevator estimates that about 60% of its business is in exports to the United States.

To find out more about Federal Elevator and its products and services, visit their Web site at **www.federalelevator.com** or call them toll-free at 1-888-785-5438.

PROFILE: PDG PRODUCT DESIGN GROUP INC.

"Harriet recently moved into Extended Care and brought along her own manually operated tilt wheelchair. The chair did not meet her needs. Due to osteoporosis Harriet had severe kyphosis and fixed neck flexion. In the upright position she could move her wheelchair back and forth, but she could only see the floor. When the wheelchair was tilted she could see, but she could not move. Undertaking a seating assessment, Mary Cho, Occupational Therapist, determined a PDG Stellar with specialty back and seat cushion would best meet Harriet's needs. Harriet needed a low-seat-height manual-tilt wheelchair that could give her a view of her environment and allow her to engage with her surroundings."

Thus begins a recent item in the newsletter produced by PDG Product Design Group Inc. Founded in 1996, this innovative Vancouver company builds and markets manual wheelchairs that meet the needs of some previously underserved segments of the wheelchair market. PDG's President, Phil Mundy, says that his company's focus is on filling some very particular niche markets, rather than on high-volume manufacturing.

He cites the introduction of the Eclipse manual wheelchair, the first wheelchair designed specifically for extra large people as an example of the kinds of small market his company caters for. The Eclipse comes in models with a 350 lb capacity and one that can handle from 600 to 1,000 lbs.

Another specialized product is the Bentley manual tilt wheelchair, a high agitation/high stability wheelchair designed for people who are very hard on equipment. It is used by people who have such disabilities as those associated with brain injury, Huntington's Chorea, athetoid cerebral palsy and by

psychiatric/geriatric patients.

Mr. Mundy says that the Stellar manual tilt wheelchair is the product for which his company is seeing the largest increase in demand. "Manual tilt chairs have been around for five or six years, but PDG's is the first one to be independence-oriented. It doesn't require an attendant to adjust the tilt or to propel it. The wheelchair user has independent control of the Stellar." This, he said, helps to maximize the user's independence, increasing the person's self-esteem. He also pointed out that by having the power to make adjustments for comfort and convenience without the assistance of an attendant can, for some people, extend the length of time they are able remain in their chair and reduce the amount of time they must spend in bed. This can also help to enhance their employability.

After working as a rehabilitation consultant for about 20 years, first in Ontario and then in B.C., Mr. Mundy decided to go into the business of developing and marketing what has become a well-regarded line of highly customizable wheelchairs. A program that was in place in the B.C. Ministry of Employment and Investment to help kick start health technology in the province provided an impetus to get started and Phil Mundy hasn't looked back. He likes what he does and says, "it's way more fun to be developing assistive technology than consulting on it."

To find out more about PDG's products, visit their Web site at:
http://www.Prodgroup.Com

RYERSON UNIVERSITY AND THE LIBERATED LEARNING PROJECT

In the fall of 1999, Ryerson University was invited by Saint Mary's University to join the Liberated Learning Project as part of a research consortium of university and industry partners including IBM Research, MTT, University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia, University of Texas at Austin, and University of Southampton, UK. The Liberated Learning Project team is exploring how speech recognition technology used in the university classroom impacts students with disabilities, faculty members, and non-disabled students.

The Liberated Learning Project originated at the Atlantic Centre of Research, Access and Support for Students with Disabilities at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Funding of over 1.2 million dollars for the Liberated Learning Project was generously provided by the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and is one of the largest research grants in Saint Mary's University history.

In Liberated Learning lectures, instructors use a unique application of speech recognition technology, Via Voice, designed for classroom use that digitizes the spoken lecture and simultaneously displays it as text for the entire class. Students can see and hear the lecture as it is delivered. One goal is to provide students with comprehensive, edited software-generated lecture notes within 48-72 hours of the lecture.

As of September, 2001, three instructors from the Business Faculty at Ryerson, Terry Sulymko, Tina West and Dave Meston will be using speech recognition technology with their students. Next semester, other instructors will be recruited for the project and more curriculum notes will be available to students who can benefit from this service.

Members of the strategic planning committee include: Melanie Panitch, Director of the School of Disability Studies, Karen McCall from Open College in Continuing Education, Ann Thomas - Learning Technology Support for students with Disabilities and Alan Cheong of Communication and Computer Systems.

The main Liberated Learning web site at St. Mary's University can be found at **http://www.liberatedlearning.com** or you can contact Maxine Laine, Assistant Director of Student Services at Ryerson University (**mlaine@ryerson.ca**) for more information.

MAINSTREAM INTEREST IN "NTS" GROWS

Sinclair, Nicholson and Associates (SNA) has made available the new "NTS" (Nxicom Text System) LAN-based TTY, accompanied by SNA's specialized consulting formula for ensuring communications access for the Deaf, deafened and hard of hearing. But interest in NTS' mainstream applications has been even stronger than its use as an accessible TTY system.

NTS is a telephone network for communication with employees and the public who use TTYs, the telephone for the Deaf, deafened, and some hard of hearing who cannot use a normal telephone. New developments in the product, however, included the following:

A secure internal Instant Messaging system which resides on the customer's server for added security; and Interactive Website Communications, with "document push". An icon on the website allows users to dial in directly to the contained NTS communications system, while the Call Flow Option in the software allows the client to control what happens to the call. Click on the icon and you can talk to Call Centre staff, talk to an individual staffer, or be directed to sources of program information. The other half of the split screen application allows the client to "push" Web pages to the caller, as required. Such pages can be information circulars, forms, registrations for newsletters, or just about anything that can be dreamed up by the end user applications staff.

"Where our clients are always interested in making services accessible for those with a disability, the mainstream applications of this software are getting the major part of the interest", according to managing partner Rick Sinclair. "We are getting a lot of calls."

For more information, contact Sinclair, Nicholson and Associates, TTY: (613) 599-1246, Voice: (613) 599-1284 or e-mail at: **SNA@sympatico.ca**

OPEN COLLEGE EMBRACES BARRIER FREE DESIGN

Open College in Continuing Education at Ryerson university has a new web site look and feel. The best part of this announcement is that the Open College site meets W3C Priority 1 guidelines on accessibility. Open College is busy working on Priority 2 and Priority 3 compliance.

Open College is making a commitment to ensure that courses offered online are as accessible as they can be. Courses that are accessible to students using adaptive technology will be identified with an accessibility symbol. This will allow students to easily recognize these courses.

The staff at Open College is also busy learning the best methods to ensure more accessible online curriculum. They are quite excited about this venture and believe we are pioneering barrier-free E-learning opportunities in Canada. They are currently developing an implementation plan for existing courses and strategies for instructors of new courses. This will only enhance the E-learning experience for everyone.

Visit **http://ce-online.ryerson.ca/de/** for examples of emergent technology that emphasizes inclusion and accessibility.

ICTA CONFERENCE CARRIES ON IN THE AFTERMATH OF A DISASTER

At some level, we all understand the notion that different aspects of our daily lives are interconnected. But do we fully understand what that really means? Can we truly "expect the unexpected"? Can we anticipate the ripple effect a catastrophic event can have on seemingly unrelated events?

Take the case of the International Conference on Technology and Aging (ICTA). This was a major conference, two years in the making and the first of its kind in North America. It was set to begin in Toronto on Wednesday, September 12, its program painstakingly organized, speakers and topics chosen, invitations issued to a number of distinguished people acknowledged to be experts in their fields and sponsorships arranged to make the conference a success .

On Tuesday, September 11, hijacked airplanes were deliberately flown into targets in the US and after arranging for incoming aircraft, including those flights bound for American destinations to land at Canadian airports, all civilian air traffic in North America was halted. Some delegates to the ICTA meeting were already in the air and unsure of where they would land in Canada and how they would make their way to Toronto. It was too late to cancel or postpone the conference and the issues under discussion, the impact of technology on an aging population and the accompanying issue of the changes in ability associated with aging, were too important to be put on hold in any case.

Some work-arounds were needed. Some of the speakers who were unable to get to Toronto e-mailed their presentations and spoke by teleconference. Attendees got the messages these speakers imparted, but there is a world of difference between hearing a message delivered from a remote location and hearing it from a person in the same room. Human communication is not simply the words we say, but how we say them: our tone of voice, our facial expressions, our body language, our proximity to those to whom we are speaking, how we occupy our space. Such subtle cues are not picked up as effectively from an electronic connection, even with videoconferencing. It is when we are without these cues that we realize that communication is not just audio and visual, but spacial as well, a point that is well-known to anyone who communicates using sign language.

There were very real psychological issues confronting attendees. On the one hand, there were some moments of guilt that they should be carrying on with this conference, the day after the American disasters. There was relief that they had made it to Toronto, uncertainty about how and when they would get home again, what the cost of additional hotel and living expenses would do to the small and fragile budgets of some of the organizations that had sponsored their attendance.

In some ways, the feeling of "what do we do now, where do we go from here and how do we get there" was somewhat analogous to suffering a traumatic injury. Mickey Milner, one of the conference organizers, said, "there is an element of disability when something like this happens. It affects every aspect of our lives from increased security, to uncertainty about when we can get home again. We feel cut off and we don't know what to do next. What's our prognosis? There was the steadfast determination not to let the important issues under discussion at ICTA be completely subsumed by shock, grief and anger. Many felt that it was important to carry on with the conference, in spite of the disruptions and the uncertainty."

In the wake of the terrorist attacks on the US, there has been some speculation that more organizations will hold virtual conferences, rather than physical ones. The communications problems outlined above will be an issue that will need to be addressed. There will be the additional problem of making electronic attendees, particularly those connecting with the group for the first time, to feel they are part of the community. It may be interesting to see what new kinds of

technology applications will be developed to minimize these distance problems. It will also be interesting to see what electronic attendance will do for people with disabilities. Will it increase their opportunities for participation?

For more information on the conference, visit **www.icta.on.ca** .

JAMES SANDERS TO TAKE OVER AS PRESIDENT AND CEO OF CNIB

James Sanders, Vice-President of Client Services and Technology for the Canadian National Institute for the Blind has been named as the CNIB's new President and Chief Executive Officer. He takes over from outgoing President and CEO, Dr. Euclid Herie, on November 1. The announcement was made this summer by Mrs. Fran Cutler, Chair of the CNIB's National Board of Directors.

Mr. Sanders has worked for the CNIB for more than 30 years. In his role as Vice-President, Client Services and Technology, he has been responsible for government relations as well as the CNIB Library for the Blind. Before moving to National Headquarters in Toronto, he was the manager responsible for government liaison, in the CNIB's Ottawa office. He became blind in his early twenties and is an enthusiastic assistive technology user.

In a press release from the CNIB, Dr. Herie stated, "on behalf of management and staff, I extend good wishes and all possible support to Jim on his appointment Staff and management share the Board's pleasure with this decision. We will seize this opportunity to be part of an exciting future filled with hope and promise for the blind of Canada."

Mr. Sanders has been a member of the Minister of Industry's Advisory Committee on Assistive Devices and Persons with Disabilities since its inception in the early 1990s. He has also been an active participant in a variety of federal and federal/provincial/territorial consultations on disability issues.

NEWS BITS

In March 2001, Betacom Corporation Inc. (**www.betacom.com**) announced the opening of it US Sales Office. They have already established 27 dealers across the USA, and signed a complementary distribution agreement with Telesensory Corporation of Sunnyvale, California. Internationally, Betacom is already shipping units to 8 countries and is in discussions with many more NGOs, Government Vision Rehabilitation services, dealers and distributors around the world.

Compusult Ltd. is now producing two new ScanTELL systems, in addition to its ScanTELL Talking Bar Code Reader software. The ScanTELL P100 is a battery-powered and completely portable unit with a handheld CCD bar code scanner that allows blind and visually impaired employees to scan bar coded items used at work and hear the corresponding bar codes spoken to them. With its optional carrying case, the ScanTELL P100 can be conveniently and comfortably worn by the user at work. Typical applications are for product stock picking and confirmation in warehouse and retail environments. The ScanTELL P100AC is an AC-powered desktop unit that provides the same capabilities as the ScanTELL P100, but uses an omni-directional laser bar code scanner so that blind users can more easily locate the bar code on an item without needing to know exactly where the bar code is located. Both new ScanTELL systems were originally designed and developed for the Travis Association for the Blind in Austin, Texas. For more information on these and other Compusult Limited assistive technology products, please call, toll-free, 1-888-388-8180 (U.S. and Canada), e-mail **info@hear-it.com**, or visit Compusult's AT web site at **http://www.hear-it.com**.

Betty Dion has taken over as president of the North American chapter of the International Commission on Technology and Accessibility (ICTA-NA). She succeeds Chuck Letourneau, who stepped down in July. ICTA-NA is a chapter of one of the six commissions set up under the auspices of Rehabilitation International, an international not for profit non-governmental organization. ICTA was established to address areas of accessibility which include habitat, transportation and communications in developing countries, as well as access to high technology and employment in developed countries.

ADIO has prepared a preliminary summary of provincial commercialization programs available across Canada to assist in turning R&D into marketable products. The summary, which does not include Federal programs, but does make reference to a couple of for-fee services available in addition to the provincial government programs, is by no means a comprehensive document and is intended to direct its users to information sources within each province. Copies of the summary are available on request from ADIO.

Betacom Corporation has been awarded a contract as the exclusive distributor of Don Johnston Inc. products for the Canadian market. The deal was announced September 4 and gives Betacom's Bridges division sole responsibility in Canada for sales, certified training, support and customer service of Don Johnston's products, which includes their Co:Writer(r) word prediction program, Write:OutLoud(r) a talking word processor program and the Discover(r) Series computer access products that replace the keyboard and mouse. "We are extremely pleased to name Betacom Bridges as our exclusive Canadian dealer", said Don Johnston, founder and CEO of the company that bears his name. "Our mission is to provide the best literacy solutions so all students can experience reading and writing success, and Betacom Bridges has been consistently committed to this goal...Our exclusive partnership allows us to harness Betacom Bridges' leadership within Canada in order to bring our industry-leading assistive technology solutions to more students and create more literacy success."

The CSA will soon be publishing B659-01, Design for Aging. This guideline provides the core principles, guiding concepts and tools applicable to the design and provision of products, services and environments that are used by seniors and whose abilities are affected by aging. For more information, e-mail the CSA at **info@csa.ca** or call them at (416) 747-2670.

Madentec Limited has announced a new companion to WISP 2000. The cheek switch, based on fibre optic technology, provides an alternative method of clicking to the standard sip/puff headset. The cheek switch fits over the ears and has a short extension fitting down the cheek that contains the fibre optics. Use a left cheek movement, like a wink, to activate a left mouse click. Similar movements of the right cheek will activate the right mouse click. For more information, contact Madentec toll-free at (877) 623-3682 or visit their Web site at **www.madentec.com** .

ADIO has prepared a preliminary summary of provincial commercialization programs available across Canada to assist in turning R&D into marketable products. The summary, which does not include Federal programs, but does make reference to a couple of for-fee services available in addition to the provincial government programs, is by no means a comprehensive document and is intended to direct its users to information sources within each province. Copies of the summary are available on request from ADIO.

Betacom Corporation has been awarded a contract as the exclusive distributor of Don Johnston Inc. products for the Canadian market. The deal was announced September 4 and gives Betacom's Bridges division sole responsibility in Canada for sales, certified training, support and customer service of Don Johnston's products, which includes their Co:Writer(r) word prediction program, Write:OutLoud(r) a talking word processor program and the Discover(r) Series computer access products that replace the keyboard and mouse. "We are extremely pleased to name Betacom Bridges as our exclusive Canadian dealer", said Don Johnston, founder and CEO of the company that bears his name. "Our mission is to provide the best literacy solutions so all students can experience reading and writing success, and Betacom Bridges has been consistently committed to this goal...Our exclusive partnership allows us to harness Betacom Bridges' leadership within Canada in order to bring our industry-leading assistive technology solutions to more students and create more literacy success."

The CSA will soon be publishing B659-01, Design for Aging. This guideline provides the core principles, guiding concepts and tools applicable to the design and provision of products, services and environments that are used by seniors and whose abilities are affected by aging. For more information, e-mail the CSA at **info@csa.ca** or call them at (416) 747-2670.

Madentec Limited has announced a new companion to WISP 2000. The cheek switch, based on fibre optic technology, provides an alternative method of clicking to the standard sip/puff headset. The cheek switch fits over the ears and has a short extension fitting down the cheek that contains the fibre optics. Use a left cheek movement, like a wink, to activate a left mouse click. Similar movements of the right cheek will activate the right mouse click. For more information, contact Madentec toll-free at (877) 623-3682 or visit their Web site at **www.madentec.com** .

OUR WEB SITE

Our Web site can be found at **strategis.ic.g.ca/adio** . At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

WHERE TO FIND US

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Mary Frances Laughton or Deb Finn
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4316 or 613-990-4297 fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
Internet: **laughton@crc.ca** or **finn.deb@ic.gc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

January 2002

CA1
IS.T
-A17

ACCESSIBLE NEWS Nº 13

CHAMPIONING THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

ADIO continues to promote the development and use of Canadian assistive technology, both in Canada and abroad. The Federal Budget of December 10, 2001 placed security as a key priority and while it did extend support to students with disabilities, it did not set out new funding for assistive technologies. We remain committed to working to secure this funding to further the development and promotion of technologies that will enhance independence for persons with disabilities. Rest assured steps are being taken to achieve our goals to help bring to fruition new assistive technology-related activities within Industry Canada. In the meantime, we will continue to champion the Canadian AT industry, advocating and promoting the use of assistive and inclusive technologies and best practices, whenever and wherever we can.

COME AND SEE US AT CSUN

ADIO will be exhibiting at this year's CSUN "Technology and Disability Conference" in Los Angeles, March 20-23. Come and see what's new with the Accessible Procurement Toolkit, Web-4-All and what else is happening in Canadian assistive technology. We'll be in the LAX Marriott, Booth Number 336, the booth with the nice big Canadian flag.

As of January 30, CSUN organizers had identified the following Canadian exhibitors: Betacom, Braille Jymico, Compusult, D.J. Technical Sales, Daedalus Technologies, Madentec, ORTC, Tactile Vision, Tash, TECSO and VisuAide.

COMPUSULT TO MANUFACTURE AND MARKET JOUSE FOR NEIL SQUIRE FOUNDATION

Compusult Limited (**www.compusult.nf.ca**) of Mount Pearl, Newfoundland completed agreements in December 2001 with the Neil Squire Foundation (**www.neilsquire.ca**) of Vancouver, B.C. and American company Prentke-Romich, to take over manufacturing and sales of the Jouse. The Jouse is

a joystick-based system for head/mouth control of a computer mouse and keyboard. The partnership was announced January 18 at the Assistive Technology Industry Association conference in Orlando, Florida. Compusult has begun processing orders for Jouse sales and rentals and has plans for enhancements to the Jouse electronics and computer interface. For more details, contact Compusult or visit **www.jouse.com**.

Compusult also unveiled several new systems and products at ATIA. The ScanTELL P100 is a battery-powered and completely portable unit with a handheld CCD bar code scanner that allows blind and visually impaired employees to scan bar coded items at work and hear the corresponding description spoken to them. This makes it ideal for product stock picking and confirmation in warehouse and retail environments. An AC-powered desktop version, ScanTELL P100AC, provides the same capabilities, but uses an omni-directional laser bar code scanner so that the bar code can be located more easily on an item, without knowing the bar code's exact location.

A new version of Compusult's FasseTrack Inventory Control System software has also been released recently. This Microsoft Windows based software is part of the FasseTrack line of automatic identification and data collection software products the company has been producing for more than five years. The new system is directly speech-enabled so that print handicapped users can operate almost all system functions independently. The accessible version is now being offered as part of the standard package. With a single key press, users can select from detailed speech output, navigation/acknowledgement output only, or no speech output.

Coming soon will be a new Microsoft Windows based software product called KeyPrompt, which is designed to assist computer users with cognitive and/or learning disabilities. KeyPrompt alerts users with displayed and/or spoken messages when they've pressed a keyboard key for too long and reminds them to stop. KeyPrompt remains in the background and will work with any Microsoft Windows application. It can be configured for the type of displayed/spoken message, key repeat duration and display message duration.

For more information on Compusult's products, contact them at: Compusult Limited, 40 Bannister Street, Mount Pearl, Newfoundland A1N 1W1 Canada, tel: 709-745-7914 or toll-free in Canada and the US at 1-888-388-8180, fax: 709-745-7927, e-mail: **info@hear-it.com**.

LIBRARY
JUN 14 2002
UNIVERSITY

BANK NOTE READER FOR BLIND, VISUALLY IMPAIRED AND DEAF-BLIND CANADIANS

Brytech, a leading developer of products to assist visually impaired, blind and deaf-blind people (**www.brytech.com**) has launched its new Bank Note Reader (B.N.R.). Developed for the Bank of Canada, it recognizes all Canadian bank notes currently in circulation, namely the Birds of Canada Series 1986, the new Canadian Journey series $10 bill and the upcoming denominations of that Series, to be released over the next few years.

After reviewing the needs with the CNIB, the Bank of Canada and potential users, Brytech's design team came up with an ergonomic solution that is compact and easy to use. Its two-tone colouring provides high contrast in the areas that matter. The user may select an appropriate output mode from bilingual-speech, tone or vibration, allowing for different levels of discretion when operated in public. There is a volume control for speech and tone announcements as well as a standard headphone jack.

The B.N.R. has integrated grips down the sides to prevent the unit from slipping out of the hand. Rubber pads on the underside help it to remain stationary on a table or counter. The battery door hinges rather than detaching, to prevent loss. The battery simply pushes in, without a connector that is usually associated with a 9v battery. The battery can go in either way, one way the unit speaks English and the other, French. Volume and output selection switches have a distinct feel. A wrist-strap can be attached securely to prevent loss and assist in locating the B.N.R. A protective pouch with Velcro flap is provided that has a leather loop to enable it to be conveniently carried on a belt.

Every B.N.R. is securely packaged with a battery and user instructions in bilingual Braille, in large print and on audio cassette. It is available through the CNIB (**www.cnib.4ca**) free of charge to registered blind people in Canada.

MARINA RAMP RIDER WINS CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR'S AWARD

The prestigious California Governor's Excellence in Universal Design and Technology Award for 2001 has been awarded to Surrey, B. C.-based Marina Accessibility Products Inc.(**www.marina-access.com**), for its development of the

Marina Ramp Rider™ (Ramp Rider™). The award is the latest in a series of accolades the company has won for its design of the product.

The Ramp Rider is a unique gangway inclined lift system that offers marina facilities a low-cost way of providing people with disabilities with a safe and easy means to access floating docks. Other methods of access, such as switchback ramps, are costly and in some cases impossible to construct and can be difficult to use. The Ramp Rider's system is easy to use, occupies minimal space and consists of a specialized elevator car riding on parallel tracks. Because the design is based on stable principles of geometry, the self-levelling car remains horizontal regardless of the angle of the gangway.

As a result of the Ramp Rider's strict attention to safety issues, it has been accepted as an inclined platform lift by elevator safety authorities across the nation. It will also meet the requirements of the soon-to-be-released ADA Guidelines for Recreation Facilities.

For more details about Ramp Rider features, benefits and technical specifications visit the company's web site, or call Marina Accessibility Products at 604-576-7752.

VISUAIDE – GPS SOLUTION: VICTOR ESCORT

VisuAide (**www.visuaide.com**) is currently designing the next generation of GPS-based orientation and mobility product for the visually impaired, Victor Escort.

The Victor Escort will be a fully portable solution that will work with various computing platforms such as Braille note-takers, stand-alone computing platforms and eventually on personal digital assistant (PDA) devices. It will integrate off-the-shelf hardware for GPS input, voice output to provide instructions and optional voice input for entering notes. But the real advantages of Victor Escort will reside in its software features and full adaptation to meet the requirements of the visually impaired.

VisuAide will leverage the expertise the company gained in GPS-based systems from the successful development of the CityGo, a GPS guide for tourists, which

will be commercially available early this year. The software core will be re-used and modified to support multi-platform hardware as well as augmented for build-in accessibility.

Victor Escort will build on the CityGo expertise, with the objective of guiding visually impaired people through their environment, augmenting existing aids (white cane and guide dogs), rather than replacing them. Visuaide wants to produce a design that is non-obtrusive and that will allow information to flow to the user in the most natural way possible while offering several levels of details. The system will come with a wide variety of maps that will cover most of the countries in the western world. These maps can be purchased on-line and downloaded, or ordered and delivered on CD or Flash cards, a city or a region at a time. Victor Escort is a fully scalable solution that will grow to accommodate new hardware computing platforms, more detailed geocentric information and special applications such as trekking.

Victor Escort will provide more autonomy to the visually impaired and increase their confidence in their ability to travel in their locality or further away for business and leisure. It will also increase their accessibility and enjoyment of the most useful and interesting opportunities found in their environment.

The Victor Escort's main features will be voice information control features; user-defined location marks; route planning and recording; access to GPS status information; flexibility in information presentation and guidance to allocate for various level of users (beginner, normal, advanced); and familiarity with a given environment.

VisuAide expects the first version of Victor Escort to be available on Braille note-takers in the second quarter of 2002, with other versions running on standalone computing platforms followed in 2003.

USING TECHNOLOGY? POSITIVELY!

Health Canada's Division of Aging & Seniors has published a series of Fact Sheets on everyday technologies and older Canadians. This series explores technologies that affect the daily activities of older adults. The fact sheets may be helpful to those who are new users or who may be considering using

technology for the first time. The fact sheets take a close look at specific technologies and provide tips and strategies suggested by older adults. They also uncover myths about aging and seniors' use of technology and look at the challenges facing us as we all grow older and encounter new ways of doing things.

The fact sheets in the series include:

#1. Series Overview
#2. Telecommunications: Phones and More
#3. Looking After Your Money: Technology and Banking
#4. Computers: Getting Online -- Using the Internet
#5. For the Good of Your Health: Technology and Health Care
#6. How are Everyday Technologies Kept Safe?
#7. Older Adults Mean Business!

For more information, call or write to: Division of Aging and Seniors, Health Canada, Address locator: 1908A1 Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1B4,
Tel.: 613-952-7606, Fax : 613-957-9938, E-mail: **seniors@hc-sc.gc.ca**
Questions about specific content should be directed to: Joanne Veninga at Health Canada/Division of Aging and Seniors Tel.: (613) 952-9724.

ACCESSIBLE PROCUREMENT TOOLKIT MAKES AN IMPRESSION IN EUROPE

Industry Canada's Accessible Procurement Toolkit (**strategis.ic.gc.ca/adio**) was front and centre in a presentation given at a European Commission Round Table, marking the International/European Day of Disabled Persons, December 3. Deb. Finn of ADIO was one of the invited speakers at the Round Table held in Brussels, "Discrimination by Design", which explored the concept and implementation of design-for-all principles.

The "Business Case" session, in which Deb. spoke, opened with Margaret Hickish, a UK design consultant, who gave a fascinating presentation on the work that she has been doing in the design of accessibility features for the new Scottish Parliament, which is currently under construction. Right from the outset, input from a consulting team of people with various disabilities was sought,

documented and incorporated in the building plans. The team has toured the building site at regular intervals to monitor progress. Their findings have precipitated some design changes to ensure that people with a range of disabilities, including mobility, vision, hearing and cognition will be able to access the building, which will when it is completed be the most accessible legislature in the world.

Dr. Jan Steyaert from Fontys University in the Netherlands spoke about the dislocation of usage of technology, for example, using a cellphone with one hand while steering a car with the other. He said that such dislocations lead us to expect more ease of use in the technology we use, so that we can use products under less than optimal conditions. This is a design philosophy that suggests a blurring of the line between assistive and mainstream technology: where mainstream technology is made easier to use, more people with disabilities can use it with minimal or no need for adaptation.

Francesco Aragall is a businessman from Spain who told the group about the recent establishment of a Design For All Foundation. This Foundation is made up of private sector for-profit companies who are demonstrating that the application and practice of design for all principles increases sales and market share. More than that, it also improves internal interaction in companies, thus reducing their operating costs.

The Toolkit was the focus of Deb's presentation, in which she addressed the business case for ensuring the needs of everyone are considered when purchasing anything from computers to office furniture to telephone equipment. The Toolkit generated quite a bit of interest among the audience. It is the kind of mechanism that many European countries have been looking for and it was quite clearly perceived as evidence of the leadership Canada is taking in the provision of innovative information tools to assist in the promotion and expansion of AT procurement. She also outlined a number of other activities that the Government of Canada has undertaken in support of providing accessible workplaces and accessible service to the public. It was noted during the summary of the day's events that Canada has moved beyond the "why" of accessible procurement and into the "how".

The afternoon session dealt with "The Need for Legislation". Cynthia Waddell of a US organization called the International Center for Disability Resources

spoke about the recent American trend towards aligning technology and procurement requirements with civil rights law. She also explained the implications of the Rehabilitation Act's Section 508 for suppliers of products, systems and services.

Caroline Gooding, a special advisor to the UK's Disability Rights Commission outlined some of the contents of Britain's Disability Discrimination Act, including the designation of system or service adjustments as "reasonably difficult" or "unreasonably difficult". She said that the provisions regarding the duty to change property (physical) access do not come into force until October 2004. She also told us that the DDA doesn't apply to manufactured products, but to the providers of services so that for example, the manufacturer of a coffee dispensing machine is not required to make the machine accessible, but the organization that provides coffee through the use of that machine has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure access to the coffee. She also said that housing is not covered by the Act.

Stefan Trömel, the Director of the European Disability Forum, made a plea for EU member states to introduce legislation with some bite so that companies and organizations that do not comply with accessibility legislation can be taken to court. He also suggested that non-compliant companies should be barred from profiting from public procurement processes.

The days was capped off with the Breaking Barriers Awards ceremony, at which several European companies and organizations were honoured for their work towards fashioning more inclusive communities.

To find out more about the European Day of Disabled Persons, visit the EDDP Web site at **eddp.edf-feph.org/edf** .

DAWSON COLLEGE PUBLISHES POLICY PAPER

Dawson College's Adaptech Project announced the availability of "Six Conditions for Full Access to Computer and Information Technologies (IT) by Postsecondary Students with Disabilities. This policy paper, written by Christian Généreux, Maria Barile, Chantal Robillard, Daniel Lamb and Catherine S. Fichten, is a result of discussions with more than 800 Canadian college and

university students with disabilities.

The paper describes six obstacles that currently exist that result in limited access to technological supports students need to successfully pursue postsecondary education. Recommendations to eliminate these obstacles, drawn from the responses of the students, are provided. The document's goal is to initiate discussions among decision and policy makers and to prompt an examination of current practices. The ultimate objective is to see federal and provincial policies and practices better reflect the realities of students' actual needs.

The document is available on the Adaptech Project Web site (**www.adaptech.org**) in English and French. It is also available upon request from Adaptech in various electronic formats. Contact **adaptech@dawsoncollege.qc.ca** for more information.

STANDARDS TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF ELDERLY AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

ISO (International Organization for Standardization) has just published a new guide to help standards writers address the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities.

The document provides guidance for writers of International Standards as well as users of standards - manufacturers, designers, service providers and educators - on how the needs of older persons and people with disabilities can be taken into account in standards under development. The guide was developed in partnership with the IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission), with input from the European standardization bodies, CEN and CENELEC.

"ISO/IEC Guide 71, Guidelines for standards developers to address the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities" is available from ISO national member institutes (in Canada, from the Standards Council of Canada, 270 Albert Street, Suite 200, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6N7, tel: 613-238-3222, fax: 613-569-7808, e-mail: **info@scc.ca**, URL: **www.scc.ca**) and from ISO Central Secretariat: **sales@iso.org**. The guide is currently available in English. French and Braille versions will follow.

"The increasing prevalence and complexity of technology in everyday life presents both opportunities and challenges," said Prof. Makoto Kikuchi, Chairman of ISO's ad hoc technical advisory group on the elderly and people with disabilities. "If older persons and people with disabilities are going to be able to participate in society on equal terms, we have to improve the accessibility of products, services and environments."

The issue of accessibility to products and services has become more critical with the increasing percentage of older people in the population worldwide. While not all older persons have disabilities, the prevalence of disability or limitations is higher amongst this demographic group.

"The intention behind Guide 71 is to inform, increase understanding and raise awareness about how human abilities impact on the usability of products, services and environments, to outline the relationship between the requirements in standards and the accessibility and usability of products and services," Prof. Kikuchi explained.

"Manufacturers are going to find that the guide will help them to design and produce more products and services that more people can use, at little or no extra cost. For older persons and people with disabilities, this guide should help by the effect it has on the standards developed."

Guide 71 is intended to be part of the overall framework that standards bodies can use in their efforts to support the need for more accessible products and services. It supplements the ISO/IEC 2000 policy statement, Addressing the Needs of Older Persons and People with Disabilities in Standardization, by identifying problem areas which must be addressed in standards, while recognizing the constraint that standards should not usually be design-restrictive. The aim is standards that enhance the quality of life of older persons and people with disabilities, reduce discrimination and, at the same time, generate user-friendly products for the entire population.

For more information, contact Roger Frost, the ISO's Press and Communication Manager, Public Relations Services, via e-mail at: **frost@iso.org**.

NEW EVENT BRINGS CANADIAN A.T. AND MEDICAL RESEARCH COMMUNITY TOGETHER

London, Ontario will be the site for TechMed 2002, which takes place April 29-30. This new event brings together Canada's AT and medical research community to present leading edge research. The focus of the event is on discoveries and innovative technologies that will spawn new business enterprises and products.

About 60 Canadian researchers and emerging companies will showcase their innovations to an audience that will include Chief Technology Officers and senior management from medical device, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. Entrepreneurs searching for new business opportunities, scientists, healthcare purchasing agents, venture capital companies and hospital representatives are also expected to participate.

For researchers, TechMed 2002 will provide opportunities to commercialize research, learn key success factors from technology transfer and commercialization ventures and meet with key players in the innovation to commercialization chain. The business community will find this event an opportunity to create new products, learn about innovative new technologies, identify commercialization opportunities and arrange collaborations with researchers and institutions.

To find out more about TechMed, contact conference organizer Mary Beth Sullivan at (tel. & fax) 519-438-4662 or check out the conference Web site at **www.techmed.org** .

NEWS BITS

Industry Canada has a new Minister, The Honourable Allan Rock, who was appointed to the portfolio on January 15.

The Council on Access to Information for Print-disabled Canadians met in Ottawa on December 7-8. The Council approved the "Manager's Guide on the Production of Multiple Formats" which will be released shortly. There was discussion with RFB&D about increased Canadian collaboration and more

discussion followup on the Resource Sharing Workshops held in October AccessInfo, the bulletin of the Council is now being distributed. The group said Goodbye to Gwynneth Evans, DG, National Programs at the National Library who retired from the Public Service on January 4, 2002. The next meetings will be in the spring with Ralph Manning taking over the Secretariat at the National Library. Information on the Council can be found at **www.nlc-bnc.ca/accessinfo**.

Angelo Nikias has left his post as the CNIB's government liaison to join HRDC's Office of Disability Issues as the senior policy advisor. He took up his new position on January 7.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission launched "A Place For All: A Guide to Creating and Inclusive Workplace" on November 16. The purpose of the Guide is to help employers and employees understand their legal rights and obligations regarding the duty to accommodate, and aid in the creation of workplace accommodation policies and procedures. This publication is available as a sound recording, in large print, in braille, and on computer diskette. You may obtain such copies of this document by contacting the Commission's National Office (344 Slater Street, 8th Floor, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1E1 Tel: (613) 995-1151, Toll Free: 1-888-214-1090, TTY: 1-888-643-3304, Fax: (613) 996-9661) or by sending an E-mail to: **INFOCOM@chrc-ccdp.ca** or you can find it on the Web at: **http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/Legis&Poli/InclusiveWorkplace_MilieuDeTravailInclusif/APlaceForAllTOC_UnePlacePourTousTDM.asp?l=e**.

The Health Canada/Veterans Affairs Canada Falls Prevention Initiative has just approved a national project with the University of Victoria which will improve the knowledge and use of assistive devices among Canadian seniors and veterans. The project will explore Canadian seniors' experiences and values concerning assistive device use by holding focus groups across the country with seniors, veterans, health professionals and industry representatives working in the field of assistive devices. This information will be used to develop effective strategies to decrease the stigma of assistive device use and promote effective information dissemination on assistive devices for seniors and veterans across Canada.

The Board of Directors of GLADNET and the Executive of the European and

North American sub Commissions of the International Commission on Technology and Accessibility (ICTA) of Rehabilitation International are inviting participants to attend and submit papers to the "Information Technology, Employment and Daily Living" conference which will be held June 5 - 7, 2002. The conference will take place at the Salle Laroque, Ministry of Solidarité et Emploi, 8 avenue Ségur, Paris, France. It is fully accessible. The conference theme is to highlight concepts of accessibility and accessible information (e.g. barrier-free environment, the accessible internet and electronic networks, the Web Accessibility Initiative, accessible software and hardware products, procurement regulations and various pieces of national and international legislation, as well as human resource issues. This meeting is an opportunity to raise the awareness level of disability, accessibility, accessible environment and employment issues in the business community. Members of the ICTA and GLADNET communities, or others, wishing to make presentations are kindly asked to communicate with ICTA Europe Secretary, Maggie Ellis at **westsqas@aol.com** or GLADNET Executive Director, Carl Raskin at **info@gladnet.org** on or before March 1, 2002. Please provide a short summary (no more than 800 words) of your proposed talk. Presentations should be about 15-20 minutes including discussion. A draft agenda will be announced shortly and an announcement and registration form will be placed on the GLADNET Web site soon.

NISO Digital Talking Book Standard Z39.86 is in the final stages of approval. A few questions remained to be answered and the standard will be passed on to ANSI for adoption. Canadians such as Gilles Pepin of Visuaide, Rosemary Kavanaugh, Lynn Leith and Karen Taylor of CNIB have had pivotal roles in getting this new standard in place.

An International Conference for Universal Design is being planned to take place in Yokohama, Japan from November 30 to December 4, 2002. Conference organizers are looking for overseas participation, both in the form of conference attendance and papers to be presented. Presentations for each session will be chosen so as to enable it to become a forum for dialogue on different approaches and cultures, in relation to universal design. Further information, including dates for submission of abstracts of proposed presentations can be obtained by e-mail at: **info@ud2002.org** and information can also be found in Japanese and English on the conference Web site: **www.ud2002.org** .

It is with sadness that we report that David Kostyshyn, the driving force behind Syntha-Voice, died November 23. His dedication to his clients and his expertise in the development of leading edge software for blind and low vision computer users will be sorely missed. Please note that at least for the time being, Syntha-Voice has closed its doors.

OUR WEB SITE

Our Web site can be found at **strategis.ic.g.ca/adio** . At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

WHERE TO FIND US

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Mary Frances Laughton or Deb Finn
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4316 or 613-990-4297 fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
Internet: **laughton@crc.ca** or **finn.deb@ic.gc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Publicatio

Industrie Canada Industry Canada

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

November 2002

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 15

VISUAIDE'S BUSY YEAR: HONOURED BY CNIB, LAUNCHING NEW PRODUCTS AND OPENING A NEW OFFICE

VisuAide (**www.visuaide.com**) is having a very busy year. The Drummondville, Quebec-based company was named this year's winner of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind's (CNIB) prestigious Winston Gordon Award for the development of its digital talking book player, Victor Reader Pro. The award, which consists of a 24-carat gold medal and $15,000, was presented at a ceremony in Fredericton on September 21.

Gilles Pepin, the founder and president of VisuAide, said the award was unexpected but welcome. "It's a recognition by the CNIB that we are a growing company and that our product meets the needs of a lot of people." He also noted that with the CNIB currently in the process of converting their talking book collection to digital format, there is a lot of attention being paid to recent technical advances in talking book technology. Traditional talking books use playback devices that have to be rewound or fast-forwarded to a desired spot. These devices are fast becoming obsolete. With products such as Victor Reader Pro, which uses the DAISY standard electronic book format and an increasing amount of content being produced in digital format, reading material will become more readily available to more print-handicapped Canadians.

"Analogue technology has served us well for almost 30 years, but it can no longer meet the needs of talking book users," said Jim Sanders, CNIB president and CEO. "Digital technology, such as the Victor Reader Pro, allows us to produce audiobooks that enable blind and visually impaired Canadians to access the same information as quickly an efficiently as their sighted peers."

But VisuAide's product line extends beyond talking book readers. The company is poised to launch Victor Trekker, its GPS-based (global positioning satellite) navigation system, designed to work with various computing platforms such as Braille note-takers, stand-along computers and on personal digital assistants (PDAs.) The system was presented by VisuAide's Vice-President of Sales and

LIBRARY
FEB 23 2003
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Marketing Yvan Lagacé at Technovision 2002, a conference and exhibition organized by the CNIB's Quebec Division in September and it generated a good deal of excitement.

Victor Trekker will integrate off-the-shelf hardware for GPS input, voice output to provide instructions and optional voice input for entering notes. The system is intended to augment rather than replace existing mobility aids such as white canes and guide dogs. Mr. Pepin pointed out that Victor Trekker's roots go back to the company's work on an earlier navigation aid system called Strider; work that was partially supported by Industry Canada. Victor Trekker also benefits from the expertise of its strategic partner: the American firm Navtech that provides the street maps and local information. Victor Trekker gives users local information such as the proximity of points of interest, the location of hotels, restaurants or other destinations. The system comes with a wide variety of digital maps that cover large urban agglomerations in the western world and additional maps can be purchased and downloaded on-line or delivered on CD or Flash cards. Initially available for use on Braille note-takers, Victor Trekker's other versions, eg., the PDA version, will be available early in 2003.

VisuAide is also opening an office in Toronto, to provide even better service to its customers across Canada. The new office is managed by Aimee Todd, who comes to the company after more than a dozen years' experience with the Ontario Ministry of Education, including management of the assessment centre at the W. Ross Macdonald School, a residential facility for children who are blind, deaf/blind or who have low vision.

Exports are still a major source of revenue for VisuAide. Mr. Pepin estimates that 80 to 85% of the company's sales are outside of Canada. This year alone has seen major sales of Victor Reader technology and software to both the UK's Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) and to Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D) in the US.

VISABLE IMAGE(TM) TAKES MANHATTAN

This holiday season, shoppers who have low vision will be able to browse books, periodicals and other materials at Barnes & Noble's flagship store in New York City. The bookseller has partnered with Mississauga, Ontario's Betacom Corporation (**www.betacom.com**) to provide store visitors with access to VisAble IMAGE(TM), Betacom's video reading device.

"Barnes & Noble takes great pride in providing our customers with the best in books and the best in customer service. We are delighted that we can now extend our service to those affected by diminished vision. We all have a love of reading and to be able to provide a way to continue to read, even when our eyes try to complicate matters, is a very positive thing. We want to thank Betacom for helping us to offer this capability through the use of their revolutionary VisAble IMAGE(TM) reading station." said Carla Oliver, Community Relations Director of Barnes & Noble's 18th Street Store. "With the use of the VisAble IMAGE(TM), those who have low vision can now enjoy the same sort of browsing activity that we all generally take for granted."

Larry Ekiert, Vice President - Marketing of Betacom, remarked: "We are very proud to be breaking new ground with the Barnes & Noble 18th Street Store to provide their clients with more access to reading materials. This initiative puts Barnes & Noble at the forefront of accessibility through a very timely public outreach program. The low vision community is one that has been frequently overlooked by the retail industry. We have developed the VisAble IMAGE(TM) based on extensive feedback from expert end-users, vision specialists, clinical researchers and other specialists from around the world. The result, the VisAble IMAGE(TM) is the most versatile and easiest to use reading station available."

For more information about the VisAble(TM) line and other Betacom products, contact the company at 450 Matheson Blvd. E., Unit 67, Mississauga, Ontario L4Z 1R5, tel: 905-568-9977, toll-free: 1-800-353-1107, fax: 905-568-9925 or e-mail them at: **info@betacom.com** or e-mail their US office at **infous@betacom.com**.

CANADIAN COMPANY FIRST TO OFFER COMPLIANCE TOOLKIT FOR NEW US LAW

Montreal-based XMLMentor **(http://xmlmentor.net)** has launched a tool to help the publishing industry produce textbooks in Braille and other specialized formats, quickly and more easily.

A new law in the United States, called the Instructional Materials Accessibility Act (IMAA) was passed to ensure elementary and secondary school students who are print-disabled get timely access to instructional materials in the specialized formats they need. Publishers will be required to prepare textbooks and instructional materials in a national XML-based electronic file format that will allow content to be converted to such formats as braille, synthesized speech, digital text, digital audio books (ie., in DAISY/NISO format) or large print.

XMLMentor's IMAA Compliance Toolkit will give publishers a robust and well tested DTD for marking up textbooks in Accessible XML format to be used as a single source. The toolkit also includes conversion scripts to convert textbooks from hard copy or proprietary electronic formats to XML; XSLT style sheets and other java-based XML Publishing Framework tools for transforming the XML single source into Accessible HTML, e-book, large print, .pdf and Digital Talking Book formats; and consulting services to support the adoption of the toolkit.

Sylvie Dan, XMLMentor's Director of Marketing and Business Development, notes that the IMAA Compliance Toolkit will help publishers lower the cost of producing accessible textbooks. "The toolkit will also accelerate the delivery of textbooks to blind or print disabled students who need them immediately."

For more information, contact XMLMentor at 1155 Boul. Rene-Levesque West, Suite 2500, Montreal, Quebec H3B 2K4 tel: 514-707-3988, fax: 514-624-7399 or e-mail them at: **learn@xmlmentor.net**.

WANTED: AT USERS WITH SCI FOR PRODUCT REVIEWS

The Spinal Cord Injury Peer Information Library on Terminology, better known as SCI PILOT, is looking for people with spinal cord injuries to submit reviews of assistive technology products they use. SCI PILOT is an information site that focusses on people's experiences getting and using assistive devices. It offers insights on this subject from people with spinal cord injuries living all over North America. Contributors detail their experiences in the Stories section and provide each other with advice on any and every topic in the Idea Exchange, where recent topics included camping, head operated robot arm and how to get a quadriplegic into the passenger seat of a 1/2 ton truck. There is also an Article section with "inside info on what works".

But the newest section is the Product Reviews area, where consumers can post their experiences with specific assistive devices for others to read. The idea is to promote information-sharing about the ways particular devices do the job for real people in specific situations. Considering that assistive technology can be expensive, and purchase decisions difficult to reverse, consumers deserve this kind of independent information to use in their decision-making. That is exactly what this resource is for. Since this is such a new section on the SCI PILOT site, it does not yet contain a large number of reviews, but here are the specific topic areas have been mapped out for contributors:

Wheelchairs
Personal Care
Computers
Recreation
Home Made Inventions
Home Modifications
Vehicles
Environmental Controls
Emergency Equipment
Workplace Modifications
Transfer Aids

The SCI PILOT Team is at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute and they ask that product reviewers be people who actually use the products they are reviewing. If you are a manufacturer and would like your product reviewed, you must have an actual user review it.

The entire SCI PILOT site is easy to use and interesting to read. Check it out for yourself at **www.scipilot.com**.

EU REPORT

- by Mary Frances Laughton

For the week of September 30, I was in Brussels participating in the annual project review of European Union 5th Framework projects in the area of support to the disabled and elderly. The review team was made up of me and 13 people from the UK, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, Austria and Hungary. This was the first time I had been able to participate in this expert review process which is very detailed and thorough and a great deal of fun as well as hard work.

Every EU project must have representative from at least three member countries. The language of the review is English which made it easy for me.

Each project is given 75 minutes to present followed by 45 minutes of discussion with the expert review panel. A detailed report is given to the project team within a month to allow them to continue or change the project as required.

The projects under review and the results are confidential but a listing of all relevant projects can be found in a handbook which is now in the ADIO Library. The web list of projects underway is available at:

http://www.cordis.lu/ist/ka1/special_needs/projects/projects_cluster.htm

I learned a lot about what is happening in the EU with the planning for the 6th Framework. There is a move to much larger, more integrated projects.

Information on the calls and the plans can be found at

http://www.cordis.lu/rtd2002/fp-activities/activities.htm

I will be presenting information on Canada's activities in Assistive Technologies at the EU IST Conference in Copenhagen in early November. I will be participating from the Communications Research Centre BADLAB over the net.

CSA LAUNCHES ACCESSIBLE DISPENSING MACHINE SUB-COMMITTEE

The Canadian Standards Association has just begun work on the development of a new national standard, aimed at increasing the accessibility of dispensing machines for everyone, including people with disabilities and older adults. The new group, B651.2, is a sub-committee of the B651 Barrier-Free Design Committee and it will look at ways to improve the usability of a variety of dispensing machines including, but not limited to, parking ticket dispensers, airline check-in kiosks and airport improvement fee terminals, public Internet kiosks, public transit ticket machines and ticket validators and hand-held point of sale terminals.

The work of B651.2 will build on the accessibility guideline developed for Transport Canada by Betty Dion Enterprises. Committee members will include manufacturers of dispensing machines and the organizations who use them, consumers, representatives from various disability organizations and regulators from various levels of government.

Deb. Finn is the Chair of the new committee. "Every day, we are confronted with technology that's harder to use than it has to be. I think that dispensing machine use constitutes a sphere of activity in which we can positively influence people's ability to gain and retain more independence in their daily activities. I'm very excited to be part of this process."

TECHNOVISION 2002

The Quebec Division of the CNIB hosted the Technovision 2002 conference and exhibition in Montreal on September 20. This is the third time Technovision has been held and the first time that it has been organized by the CNIB. The 1999 and 2000 conferences were organized by the private sector.

According to the CNIB's Susan Vida, more than 500 people from Quebec and Ontario attended the one-day event, which included presentations on new products and services for blind and vision impaired people and an exhibit hall that showcased the products of 14 assistive technology companies. The exhibit hall also featured one of the talking Automated Banking Machines developed by RBC Royal Bank of Canada in collaboration with NCR Canada. The bank machine provides users with the ability to transact their banking safely and

securely with audio lead-throughs that can be heard through a headset such as those used for personal stereos, thus eliminating the need to entrust bank cards and personal identification numbers to a third party.

The most popular information sessions at the conference were on navigation products employing Global Positioning System (GPS) satellite information. VisuAide's Victor Trekker software was demonstrated, as was Pulse Data's Braille Note GPS. Both systems are designed to allow greater independence in navigating one's environment, for example, by providing information on how to get from one location to another in a city. Both are also designed to run on platforms that also provide the user with other capabilities such as note-taking, e-mail access and other functions associated with personal computers and personal digital assistants.

In the exhibit hall, visitors were able to try out a variety of products and systems such as VisuAide's Victor talking book reader, Betacom's VisAble line of products including the Telescope, the company's CCTV system and the VisAble large-print scientific calculator. The Plextalk Recorder and the new Clearview portable videomagnifyer were also on display. But it wasn't just high-tech devices that drew visitors to the exhibitors' booths. Visitors also appreciated the variety of low tech products and independent living aids on display and available for purchase. Those who most appreciated the chance to purchase items were clients who reside in remote regions of the province or in areas removed from major city centres.

The booths of the CNIB – Quebec Division and the CNIB's Access Shop provided attendees with an opportunity to have all their questions answered, and to pick up forms and other CNIB literature. Staff of the Quebec Division as well as National Library staff working in Quebec were on site all day to meet clients and ensure the success of this event.

According to Ms Vida, the CNIB is considering holding next year's Technovision conference in Quebec City and then alternating the site of future conferences between Montreal and Quebec. "There are a lot of people who would be interested in attending a conference like this, but they find it difficult to travel to Montreal. By holding it in Quebec, we can reach more of our clients."

CCRW LAUNCHES NEW DIRECTIONS FOR NEXT THREE YEARS

- by Carole J. Barron, CCRW

The Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW) approved its Vision for 2002 – 2005 during its Board of Directors and Annual General Meeting held in Ottawa, Ontario on Saturday, October 26, 2002.

The Board has committed its direction over the next three years to:

Regaining financial stability:

Approval of a Revenue Development Strategic Plan and Committee to ensure implementation.

Approval of a Policy and Finance Committee with specific strategies for increasing by 2005 its financial reserves.

Delivering quality programs and services:

Empowering, educating and informing consumers and stakeholders.

Developing and implementing specific Program and Service work plans to focus range of services to meet needs.

Improve service provision capacity through the evaluation of existing Programs and Services.

Strengthening and building partnerships:

Strategic annual review of internal and external resources directly impacting upon the organization's capacity to implement achieve its objectives.

Communicating effectively:

Approval of a short-term communications materials development plan.

Approval to develop a long-term communication framework.

Organizational excellence:

Approval of an Eastern Regionalization Pilot Project for a period of one year with the Regional Office and Coordinator to be located in Moncton, New Brunswick.

Implementation of a Human Resources Development Plan by January 2003.

Public Education and Advocacy:

Proactive Advocacy Plan by December 2003 to recognize the CCRW as the National lead organization in the employment of persons with disabilities.

The Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW) is a Canada-wide network of organizations and individuals whose mission is to promote and support meaningful and equitable employment of people with disabilities. As innovators and agents of change the CCRW builds partnerships, develops skills, shares knowledge and influences attitudes. It is through partnerships that for over 25 years the CCRW has been helping Canadians with disabilities enter the workforce.

Additional information regarding the work of the CCRW may be viewed on its web site **www.ccrw.org** or by calling the CCRW offices at 416-260-3060.

ONTARIO SEEKS ITS CITIZENS' INPUT TO MAKE GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS ACCESSIBLE

The Province of Ontario is looking for stakeholders' opinions to assist in the development of Barrier-Free Design Guidelines for provincial government buildings, structures and premises. This work is in fulfilment of some of the obligations set out in the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, which received Royal Assent in 2001. The Act covers the Ontario Government, municipalities in the province and the broader public sector, including transit organizations, school boards, hospitals, colleges and universities.

The Barrier-Free Design Guidelines will cover buildings, structures and premises, or parts of them that have been purchased, leased, built or significantly renovated by any of the levels of government or public sector organizations identified as subject to the provisions of the Act. To assist in the development of the Guidelines, the Ontario Realty Corporation has set up a Web page on its Web site (**www.orc.on.ca**) with a questionnaire relating to barrier-free access. Once responses have been collected, a focus group will be formed to discuss the responses and to make recommendations for the guidelines.

Groups and organizations can provide their feedback to the questionnaire directly on the Web or by mail to:
Public Consultation on Barrier-Free Access
Guidelines for Government Buildings, Structures and Premises
Ontario Realty Corporation
Facility Support Services
10th Floor, Ferguson Block
77 Wellesley Street West
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1N3

For more information, visit the Accessibility Ontario Web site at **www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/accessibility**. To make inquiries about the consultation or to request the questionnaire in alternative format, call (voice) 1-877-863-9672 or (TTY) 1-888-335-6611. In the Toronto area, the number to call is (416) 326-0148.

NEWS BITS

This year, the Communications Research Centre (CRC, **www.crc.ca**), where ADIO has its offices, has been celebrating its 50th Anniversary. For half a century, CRC has been home to some of the most innovative research carried out by the Government of Canada, in partnership with other research organizations and agencies within and outside of government, universities, private sector companies and the governments and research institutions of other countries. On October 4 and 5, CRC threw open its doors to showcase some of the award-winning R&D that has put the research centre on the map, as well as the newest innovations and among the exhibits presented was a small display of some of the assistive technologies whose development was partially supported by Industry Canada, often with advice from CRC's researchers. CRC is where Canada's communications satellites were at least partially developed and built and where they and many other countries communications satellites have undergone pre-launch testing. It's also where the Canadarm was developed and where the world's first permanent international connection to the Internet (still known at the time as ARPANET) was established. In 1987, CRC and NASA shared an Emmy award for some of the pioneering work they did in the area of broadcast satellite technology.

An online tutorial is being developed for the Manager's Guide to Multiple Formats to help guide government publication personnel in making their publications accessible for all clients. The tutorial will include examples of such formats as large print to clearly show how printed products can be made accessible for people with disabilities. The tutorial is designed to build upon the information in the Guide, providing a practical step-by-step approach that includes checklists, reviews, exercises, plus templated order forms and communications plans that managers can put to use right away. The tutorial is expected to be available by year's end. In the meantime, we recommend checking out the Guide, now online at:
http://nlc-bnc.ca/accessinfo/s36-202.001-e.html

Tibby's, a Duncan, B.C.-based company, is looking for buyers, investors or partners to expand production of its FREEDOM all-terrain electric wheelchair. Contact the company at 7469 Rosevear Rd., Duncan, B.C. V9L 5Z8 or email them at **tonya@seaside.net** for more information. You can also visit the FREEDOM Website at **www.islandserve.com/~tonya**.

On October 17 the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC), the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and Henry Vlug announced that a settlement had been reached regarding closed captioning on CBC English Television and CBC Newsworld. The settlement calls for the CBC to provide 100% closed captioning for both of these English services. As part of the settlement, CBC Television is taking significant steps to accelerate its timetable for closed captioning. By November 1 this year, all programming on both CBC English Television and CBC Newsworld will be regularly captioned, including live breaking news, promos and commercials produced by the CBC. The broadcaster has committed substantial additional capital and operating resources, including new hardware and software and captioners on call 24 hours a day, in order to achieve these goals. The settlement concludes a process that began with a complaint filed by Mr. Vlug with the CHRC in 1997. Commenting on the outcome, Mr. Vlug said "Today's settlement is an important milestone for the Deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing communities. Now would be a good time for the other broadcasters to begin providing closed captioning of all their programming, too."

The 2002 Dr. Jonas Salk Award has been given to Dr. Geoffrey Fernie. He was chosen for the award on the strength of products he has invented to increase

independence for people with disabilities. Dr. Fernie, who is Director of Research in Aging and Director of the Centre for Studies in Aging at Toronto's Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre and a professor in the University of Toronto's Department of Surgery, holds patents for a number of assistive devices, including the world's first battery-powered portable overhead patient lift system, called SturdyLift(TM). The Salk Award is a $10,000 prize, co-sponsored by Aventis Pasteur Ltd and the Ontario March of Dimes.

The CSA B651 Barrier-Free Design Committee has voted to participate in international-level standards development and has established a Canadian Advisory Committee (CAC) to the International Organization for Standardization committee, ISO TC 59/SC 16, Accessibility and Usability of the Built Environment. The CAC held its first meeting in Ottawa in September. Betty Dion, the Chair of B651, is also the CAC Chair and the committee receives administrative support from the Standards Council of Canada, which is the Canadian signatory to the ISO and other international standards-setting bodies. By participating in the work of ISO TC 59/SC 16, Canada's profile is raised as a world leader in the development of standards that meet the access needs of older adults and people with disabilities.

Transport Canada's Web site, Access to Travel (**www.accesstotravel.gc.ca/main-e.asp**) was the recipient of one of the Distinction Awards given out at this year's Technology in Government Week (GTEC). Access to Travel is one of the partner sites on the same Government disability Web portal as Industry Canada's Assistive Technology Links, Natural Resources Canada's Mapping for the Visually Impaired and HRDC's Disability WebLinks, "Persons with Disabilities On-line" (**www.pwd-online.ca**). The Transport Canada site won this year's silver medal in the E-Managing the Human Dimensions of E-Government category of the National E-Government group of awards.

Remote video sign language interpretation was one of the features at CANARIE's (**www.canarie.ca**) 8th Annual Advanced Networks Workshop, November 18-20 in Montreal. Using CA*net4, researchers from McGill University showed a deaf patient and doctor at the workshop communicating through the use of an interpreter who was located at the University of New Brunswick. The two sites were connected by multiple, near real-time 25Mb/s digital audio/video streams.

December 31, 2002 is the deadline date by which Government of Canada Web sites are expected to conform to the Government's Common Look and Feel policy, including the provisions regarding accessibility for people with disabilities. Departments such as Industry Canada have been working hard to ensure that the policy is implemented in time for the beginning of the new year.

The Assistive Technology Centre, in partnership with the Nova Scotia Community College, the South Shore District School Board, Betacom Corporation and the Assistive Technology Centre Society, will host Nova Scotia's first international Assistive Technology "Best Practices" Conference in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, April 3-5, 2003. This will include hands-on workshops, AT best practices seminars, AT vendor displays and pre-conference workshops. The keynote speaker for the event will be Dr. Marcia Scherer, author of "Living in the State of Stuck: How Technology Impacts the Lives of Persons with Disabilities". For more information about the conference, visit **http://ATAINS.EDNET.NS.CA** or contact the conference coordinator, Saundra Myers at ATAINS CONFERENCE c/o Assistive Technology Centre, 75 High Street, Bridgewater, Nova Scotia B4V 1V8, tel: 902-543-4702, fax: 902-543-0190, e-mail: **myerssm@lunenburg.nscc.ns.ca**.

The Canadian Association of the Deaf (CAD - **www.cad.ca**) is hosting the 14th World Congress (WCD) of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) in Montreal, July 18-26, 2003. This is Canada's first time as host of the WCD, an event that is only held once every four years. The week-long Congress is expected to draw more than 3,000 Deaf and non-Deaf participants from 120 WFD member countries. The programme will include workshops/presentations (many of them with non-Deaf as well as Deaf presenters), exhibits and arts/entertainment performances. More than 100 interpreters are expected to attend and the WCD will operate with five official languages: ASL, LSQ, International Sign, English and French. For more information, visit the CAD Web site, contact them at: Canadian Association of the Deaf, Suite 203, 251 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1X3, 613-565-2882 (voice), 613-565-8882 (TTY), or 613-565-1207 (fax), or e-mail: **cad@cad.ca**.

OUR WEB SITE

Our Web site can be found at **strategis.ic.gc.ca/adio** . At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

WHERE TO FIND US

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Mary Frances Laughton or Deb Finn
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4316 or 613-990-4297 fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
Internet: **adio@crc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Industrie Canada Industry Canada

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

March 2003

A1
ST
17

ACCESSIBLE NEWS Nº 16

LIBRARY
JUN 04 2003
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

COME SEE US AT CSUN!

Visitors to the 18th Annual "Technology and Disability" conference sponsored by California State University, Northridge (CSUN) will find the Assistive Devices Industry Office in its traditional location in the main exhibit hall of the Marriott Hotel: Booth #336. We will be demonstrating the Accessible Procurement Toolkit (**www.apt.gc.ca**), showing off our information on the Assistive Technology Links site (**www.at-links.gc.ca**) (French: **www.liens-ta.gc.ca**) and introducing you to AssistiveX (**www.assistivex.com**)

AssistiveX is an assistive technology exchange web portal designed to elevate the profile of Canada's R&D activities in the assistive technology field and to provide additional marketing opportunities for individual companies in the industry. Through the use of the portal companies, researchers and consumers will draw further linkages within the sector.

So drop by our booth and say "hello". In addition to the systems and technology we will be showing, we will also have product literature on display from various Canadian AT companies and organizations. We're pretty easy to find too: we're the booth with the nice big Canadian flag.

CANADIAN ANGEL INVESTORS FORM AN ASSOCIATION

The National Angel Organization (NAO), a new national association of Canada's angel investors, was announced at the second annual Angel Investor Summit in October 2002. The group has several goals including creating an inventory of angel investors in Canada, pressing for changes on tax and regulator to encourage investing; and providing advice and training for its members.

Assistive Technology developers looking for investors should note that the NAO is a non-profit organization and does not itself make any investment in early stage

businesses. Rather than a matchmaking service that marries investors and entrepreneurs, the NAO is an organization dedicated to improving the effectiveness of early stage investors and thereby the lot of all related economic stakeholders. Fund seekers should visit the NAO's Library page, which is regularly updated with links to organizations that make early stage equity investments. Each of these organizations has its own decision-making criteria.

The potency of early angels only meetings inspired a core group to attempt a more ambitious larger social gathering that would also serve a philanthropic purpose. In May, 2001, Henry Vehovec chaired the first CHIN UP Angel Investor Golf Invitational in support of children's injured nerve research at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children. By gathering more than 100 angels a critical mass was reached that created recognition for the group as the largest ever dedicated gathering of angel investors in Canada.

A strong demand emerged from within the group to reconvene with an educative, professional development agenda, which resulted in the first Angel Investor Summit held in October 2001. The Summit saw the emergence of special interest groups develop largely along industry cluster lines. Following this initial Summit, a market research study was conducted by several Rotman MBA students under the direction of Dean Roger Martin and Angel Investor Summit Chair, Henry Vehovec in the summer of 2002. Survey results were analyzed and reviewed and were presented at the second Angel Investor Summit held on October 30, following which angels voted overwhelmingly in favour of creating the non-profit NAO.

"The NAO was formed by angels for angels, with a mission and mandate to provide an educational framework, encourage best practices, and stimulate cross-pollination among Canada's emerging regional angel groups," said NAO's President Henry Vehovec.

The NAO's founding members believe their organization will have a positive impact on Canada's economy by helping to increase the quality, quantity and success of angel investments, thereby increasing the pool of available capital for innovative start-ups. SMEs may find it easier to locate seed financing and the group is confident that the net result of increased investment activity will be both the generation of new jobs and the retention of Canadian skills and talent. To learn more about the NAO, visit their Web site at **www.angelinvestor.ca**

WRAP-UP: ATIA CONFERENCE

The Assistive Technology Industry Association held its 4th annual conference in Orlando from January 15-18 with over 1000 people in attendance. It was my first time at this event which next year will be moving to site at Disneyworld to accommodate more exhibitors and attendees.

Canadians are prominent on the Board of ATIA as well as providing some of the most exciting booth exhibits. Madentec, Visuaide, Betacom, Tash, Daessy and Compusult were all showing new and exciting products. The client base for this conference seemed to me to be more from the education and OT side. I gave a paper on the AT industry Canada and was among a number of Canadian speakers providing their perspectives on the industry and persons with disabilities in Canada.

Florida was cold but welcoming and Canada certainly shone at this show. For another persons perspective on this conference, check out
www.at508.com/articles.jw_011.asp

- Mary Frances Laughton

CANADIAN HEARING SOCIETY: A WELL-KEPT SECRET

- by Deb. Finn, with Donna McAllister and Christina Narducci

Just before Christmas 2002, the TTY in my office stopped working. Fifteen minutes later, I had ordered a new one on-line and it was delivered six days later. I didn't have to dig around on the Web, guessing which keywords would help me locate what I needed. I knew that one place to look was the on-line store at the Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) Web site. Many Canadians have no idea where to purchase devices such as TTYs, Voice Carry-Over phones, alerting systems, smoke detectors, assistive listening accessories and other assistive devices used by and with deaf, deafened or hard of hearing people. Knowing about organizations such as the CHS can cut short the often frustrating task of tracking down and purchasing such equipment.

The CHS was incorporated in 1940 to impartially serve and support deaf, deafened

and hard of hearing people, parents of deaf and hard of hearing children and to educate the hearing public. While many of its services are only available to residents of Ontario, the CHS does provide support of consumer groups in advocacy; consultation and training; mail order assistive devices and educational materials; and public education on a nation-wide basis.

With the inception of the Technology Initiatives Department (TID) two years ago, the CHS began to take a proactive role in the research and development of communication technology and a new sub-department called Northwind Communications was established.

The last few years have seen the development of a videoconferencing network that spans Ontario from Fort Frances to Windsor and provides Deaf people with the ability to communicate in sign language. The building of the network was unique: it was built on the needs of the Deaf community which is thereby enabled to communicate using technology of sufficient quality to allow smooth transmission of visual communication. The network was a huge success and CHS has never looked back. With the first network built on the needs of deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people, Northwind Communication is now in the unique position to develop the first Video ISP in the country. Indeed, it may be the only Video ISP in the world. Using broadband technology, Northwind Communication wants to provide the same quality of videoconferencing it now has in its 26 offices, to people in their own homes.

Marc Serré, Director of TID and his team have been nominated for numerous awards over the past two years and have been asked to present their work in the United States and Canada. Video streaming media services, wireless communication and accessible web technologies are also being researched with the emphasis on people's needs, not technology's limitations. For more information on TID and Northwind Communication, contact Marc Serré at **mserre@northwindcom.chs.ca**.

Christina Narducci is a Technical Devices Specialist with the Ottawa Chapter. I met with her just after the New Year and she filled me in on some of the recent activities of the CHS. She told me about the CHS' "Residual Inhibition" project, which was funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation and is aimed at people who have tinnitus, a condition that affects more than 5 million Canadians, who

perceive sounds that are present in the ears and/or head when no external sound is present. A professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of New Brunswick named Don Lyon has developed what he believes to be the first commercially available technique to correctly diagnose and treat tinnitus. He has developed a software package that allows the audiologist to use the computer for a hearing test that will pinpoint both the frequency and tone of the ringing. The audiologist then duplicates that sound on a CD so the patient can take it home to listen to. This method of dealing with the incessant ringing is called "Residual Inhibition", which occurs when tinnitus sufferers listen to a specific sound for a short while and then notice that their tinnitus is gone, or is significantly reduced in volume. The Residual Inhibition Treatment Program consists of an initial appointment that includes a tinnitus assessment, an audiological evaluation and counselling. A follow-up session is conducted after the sufferer has spent a week listening to each of the three tracks. CHS has performed trials of this method, the results of which are being compiled and are not yet published.

CHS endeavours to ensure that people with disabilities no longer are the last ones to benefit from new technological advances. CHS has shown that it can manipulate existing technology into providing accessible communications that benefit deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people. For further information on the above or any other device, do not hesitate to contact the Canadian Hearing Society at (613) 521-0509 (Ottawa Chapter), or visit the CHS Web site at **www.chs.cs**.

IMHA ON THE MOVE

On January 31 and February 1, 2003, I was privileged to attend "IMHA on the Move" in Calgary. IMHA is the Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis, one of the 13 CIHR institutes and the one which is the obvious home to the Rehabilitation Sector. The meeting was to celebrate the achievements of the institute and to contribute to the planning for the health research agenda in this vibrant scientific field.

In attendance were the leaders in R&D in the science of arthritis, rehabilitation, bone, muscle, skin and oral health. There were several Canada Research Chairs, Deans of Canadian Faculties and researchers of all kinds. Several members of the CNCERE (the Canadian Network of Rehabilitation Engineering Research)

planning team were there and gave compelling presentations on the need for R&D into assistive technologies.

Out of the two day sessions came the planning for developing research questions and initiatives for future Requests for Applications under the three IMHA research themes: Physical activity, Mobility and Health; Tissue injury, Repair and Replacement; Pain, Disability and Chronic Diseases. Planning is also underway for a number of workshops and consensus conferences for longer term strategies. A number of New Emerging Teams will be supported. I will continue to monitor and participate in this planning process and we will let our readers know about advances and new programmes of activities.

For more information on IMHA, check out its site at:
www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/institutes/imha

- by Mary Frances Laughton

CANADIAN COMPANY LEADS UN-SPONSORED INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON ACCESSIBILITY

North Vancouver B.C.-based Vision Office (**www.visionoffice.com**)will head a presentation team at the Interregional Seminar and Regional Demonstration Workshop on Accessible Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) and Persons with Disabilities, March 3-7, in Manila, Philippines.

The UN-sponsored seminar and workshop will bring together practitioners and experts in disability policy and of ICT in social life and development from around the world. Leo Valdes, Managing Director of Vision Office, will serve as the main facilitator for the five-day event.

The seminar will provide a forum for the exchanges of knowledge and experience in promoting awareness, and in planning and developing accessible ICT solutions in the context of sustainable and equitable development. Attention is directed to interested Governments of least developed countries, low income countries and countries with economies in transition. The seminar's theme is "Empowering Persons with Disabilities through ICT".

The presentation team includes Cynthia Waddell, Executive Director of the San Jose, California-based International Center for Disability Resources on the Internet and an international expert in law, policy and technology. Joining the seminar using accessible media and online collaboration is Maria Cristina Sara-Serrano, President of New York-based Associates for International Management Services and an advocate of human rights for persons with disabilities.

"We are fortunate to have a lot of talent in international policy and technology in our team," says Leo Valdes, "and equally fortunate to have country experts in disability issues within our audience. The synergies in these workshops benefit presenters and participants alike." Participants will be preparing strategic frameworks in promoting awareness, creating policy bases and building national capacities for accessible ICT for all.

The event is organized by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons (NCWDP) in the Philippines. Funding and resources were provided jointly by a United Nations Development Fund and the government of the Republic of the Philippines.

Vision Office Support Services, Ltd., is an IT consulting company specialising in training and support of end-user systems. Vision Office has been involved in UN-sponsored accessibility courses in Bangkok, Mexico City, New York and Ljubljana, Slovenia. Vision Office is also part of the WorldEnable consortium (**www.worldenable.net**), an Internet Accessibility initiative.

The seminar workshop website is at **www.worldenable.net/manila2003**.

AT APPLICATIONS CERTIFICATE PROGRAM NOW OFFERED IN CANADA

The Center on Disabilities at California State University, Northridge (CSUN) is proud to announce the 2003 offerings of the "Assistive Technology Applications Certificate Program (ATACP)" in Toronto this summer. This 100-hour certificate course consists of a combination of online, live and project venues to address

timely applications of today's technology for various disabilities, in a variety of settings. In addition, the online workshop will address Canadian AT issues.

The ATACP workshop will consists of 52-hours of online coursework which will give participants many needed resources, along with case studies of AT Applications within a variety of settings. The format of the online curriculum is as follows:

1. Introduction of Assistive Technology
2. Guiding the Process with AT Assessment
3. Leadership Challenges with High School and Higher Educational Settings
4. Funding and Policy Issues
5. Applications of AT via Case Studies

During the live training, which will be held at Novotel Toronto Center, June 16 - 20, CSUN trainers and consultants will be facilitators to cover curriculum and best practices that will enable students, teachers, faculty and staff to address students needs and apply tools/technology appropriately for both Canadian and American service providers.

An eight-hour project will also be required in order for participants to apply the knowledge they have gained through the certificate program. An action plan or project will need to be submitted by September 20, 2003. Registration forms are being accepted now. The sooner your registration is received, the sooner you can gain access to the 52-hours of online curriculum.

For more information and a registration form, please contact Kirk D. Behnke, M.Ed., ATP, Coordinator of Training, Grants, & Contracts, Center on Disabilities, California State University, Northridge (CSUN), tel/TTY: (818) 677-2578, fax: (818) 677-4929, Web: **www.csun.edu/codtraining**.

NO MORE ALPHABET SOUP!

Tired of trying to figure out the strings of initials you find in some government documents? Industry Canada (**www.ic.gc.ca**) has a new feature on its Web site, designed to take the guesswork out of some of the department's commonly-used

acronyms. The page can be found in the "Help" section as well as on the "Site Map". To go directly to the Acronym page, visit:

English: **http://www.ic.gc.ca/cmb/welcomeic.nsf/ICPages/Acronyms**
French: **http://www.ic.gc.ca/cmb/welcomeic.nsf/icPages/Acronymes**

There is an interesting feature you can access when you look at the page in Internet Explorer. If you mouse over the acronym, the full name will appear. Also, beside each item, is the acronym of the corresponding item in either English or French (a handy feature when you don't immediately know what it is). For example:

ABC - Aboriginal Business Canada (EAC)
"EAC" is the corresponding French acronym for "ABC" and if you mouse over "EAC" when in Internet Explorer, the phrase "Entreprise autochtone Canada" will appear.

NEWS BITS

The first Assistive Technology Application and Integration Nova Scotia (ATAINS) Assistive Technology"Best Practices" Conference takes place in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia from April 3-5. Mary Frances Laughton will be one of the featured speakers. To register, visit the ATAINS Web site at **http://atains.ednet.ns.ca**.

The Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) is inviting public comment on issues relating to pay telephone service in Canada, including access by hearing-impaired and speech-impaired consumers. Comments are due at the CRTC by May 1, 2003. The Commission invites all parties to provide their views, with reasons and supporting information, where appropriate, on access to pay telephone service, including: the extent to which consumers rely on pay telephone service; the availability of pay telephone service to meet consumers' needs; the rate at which pay telephones have been or will be removed from service; the impact of the removal of pay telephones on consumers; and whether there is a need to establish a regime for public interest pay telephones. The Commission will only consider pricing policy issues and rate proposals

relating to public interest pay telephones and to pay telephones equipped for deaf consumers, as part of this proceeding. The Commission intends to address other pricing policy issues and rate proposals in a separate proceeding. Any members of the public who only wish to file written comments, without receiving copies of the various submissions, may do so by submitting their comments in writing to the Commission, at CRTC, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0N2, by fax at (819) 953-0795 or by email at **procedure@crtc.gc.ca**. For more information, see the Public Notice on the CRTC Web site at:
http://www.crtc.gc.ca/archive/ENG/Notices/2002/pt2002-6.htm.

A draft version of the proposed new edition of The Canadian Standards Association's (CSA) Standard B651, "Barrier-Free Design" is now available for public review. The proposed new edition of B651 has undergone extensive revisions from the 1995 version of the Standard. The public review process is part of the CSA's standards development directives. It provides the opportunity for individuals and organizations not involved in the development of the standard to comment on the technical content. To download a PDF version of B651 in English or French, click on:
www.csa-intl.org/english/infoupdate/dispatcher_en.asp?gotosection=public_review#draftslist. To receive a copy in print or in WordPerfect format, e-mail Ian Brodie at: **ian.brodie@csa.ca**. The public review period closes April 7, 2003.

The first meeting of the new sub-committee CSA B651.2 "Barrier-Free Design for Dispensing Machines" was held in Ottawa on December 5, 2002 and work has begun on developing a format that will anticipate technical developments as they arise. The committee meets again on March 10.

Robert S. Trimbee, the Executive Director of the National Broadcast Reading Service (**www.accessdome.com/nbrs**) which operates both VoicePrint Canada (**www.voiceprint.ca**) and AudioVision Canada (**www.AudioVision.ca**), was one of the speakers at the 2003 Canadian Satellite Users Conference. The conference was held in Toronto on February 18. He told conference-goers that there is an exciting commercial future for described programming, pointing out that in addition to becoming an entrenched part of Canada's television regulations, description costs have fallen as much as 70% in the last two years and it is now becoming a competitive business. Mr. Trimbee noted that in January, ExpressVu

set aside up to eight channels to broadcast the described version of programs aired by conventional TV broadcasters. Open format broadcasting will allow all viewers to hear the described soundtrack without the need to use special equipment. He said he hopes to reach an agreement with ExpressVu whereby the channels they have set aside can also be used for open format broadcasting of films that AudioVision Canada has described. But Mr. Trimbee cautioned that "much of the good that has happened to date could slip away if an accessible electronic program guide continues to be unavailable, making it impossible at any given time for vision-restricted viewers to independently check to see what's on each channel." He reminded his audience that the inclusion of described programming can enhance the future success of specialty television services distributed by direct-to-home satellite and terrestrial relay services. "If you include described programming in your rotation and do so in open format", he said, "you remove many of the access costs and challenges and create the time continuum needed to allow DTH/HDTV to be established as the distribution technologies of choice."

Dr. Euclid Herie has joined the Board of Directors of VisuAide. Dr. Herie is a past President and CEO of the CNIB and is now the Institute's President Emeritus. He was also President of the World Blind Union (WBU) from 1996 to 2000 and continues as an officer of the WBU. Commenting on the appointment, company President Gilles Pepin noted that "Mr. Herie's track record of success, extensive experience, and worldwide recognition will provide VisuAide with even stronger corporate leadership and identity."

In December, the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C - **www.w3.org**) released the User Agent Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 (UAAG 1.0) as a W3C Recommendation. A W3C Recommendation indicates that a specification is stable, contributes to Web interoperability and has been reviewed by the W3C Membership, who favour its widespread adoption. UAAG 1.0 is written for software developers and addresses requirements such as accessibility of the user interface, rendering of accessibility information and user choice in configuring browsers and media players. It is the third in a set of complementary Web accessibility guidelines which includes Version 1 of both the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and the Authoring Tool Accessibility Guidelines. Commenting on UAAG 1.0, Mary Frances Laughton noted that its release "will make it much easier for Government bodies to define their needs in procurement documents, in the same way that we reflect that Web content created must

conform to the W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. Now the accessibility of technologies used to access the Web can be defined as well."

MarvelSoft Enterprises, a Nanaimo B.C.-based company, has released Talking Typing Teacher for Windows (TTT), an interactive program for Windows that teaches keyboarding skills to blind and visually impaired computer users. The system uses pre-recorded digitized human speech to guide the typist through every aspect of learning to type. In addition to such features as detailed lesson curricula at three different levels of instruction, TTT also provides seven separate functions to test and enhance typing skills between each lesson, including typing games and a talking word processor that allows students to practice their new typing skills on a practical application. It will also support multiple student use. For more information, contact MarvelSoft at **www.marvelsoft.com** or call them toll-free at 1-800-987-1231.

The London Speech and Language Centre is now offering a "Jump Start Learning" program for children ages 3 to 6 with average and exceptional learning skills. The program offers preschool and Kindergarten- age children language, literacy and learning enrichment. It features small group instruction (maximum 3 children per teacher) and one-on-one teaching/therapy each day. All children are pre-tested by a college registered speech-language pathologist, who designs and supervises all teaching and therapy programs. To find out more about the program, contact Kerry Erle, M.Cl.Sc., Speech-Language Pathologist, President, or Sue Ciphery. B.A., B.Ed., Director of Educational Services, London Speech and Language Centre, 1589 Fanshawe Park Road East London Ontario N5X 3Z9, tel: (519) 642-7370, fax: (519) 642-2470 or e-mail them at **www.londonspeech.com**.

Uplift Technologies, a Dartmouth, N.S. company has recently launched a new product called the Uplift Power Seat. The company describes it as "the affordable alternative to an expensive electric lift chair", lifting 100% of a person's weight, up to 300lbs. The product is portable and can transform practically any armchair or sofa into an automatic lifting chair. For further information, contact Jamie Lee O'Neill, Brand Manager, Uplift Technologies Inc toll-free at 1-800-387-0896.

Curo Interactive is looking for suitable strategic alliances, partners and additional financing. The company, which is basesd in Kelowna, B.C., recently announced a product they describe as the world's first One Button Cellular. It's a one-touch

operation with a simplified user interface technology that allows cellphone accessibility, not otherwise available. The One Button Cellular Phone allows the user to audibly browse through multiple options until the user chooses a command or feature, engaging the phone into action. The company says that prompts, features and applications are easily programmable and then accessible by the user without the user ever having to remember how to use the device. The Curo Cellular will have all the regular GSM features as well as additional entertainment, security, monitoring, and tracking applications for specific target audiences. For more information on this product or the company, visit their Web site at **www.curointeractive.com**, call them at (250) 317-0440 or fax them at (250) 765-2784.

VoicePrint plans to coordinate "Accessibility Day" in conjunction with the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) in Toronto on August 19. The organizing committee is looking at a wide variety of potential interactive activities including demonstrations, featured speakers, challenge races and opportunities for the public to experience what it's like to live with a disability. Participants will be responsible for organizing their own event and the CNE will provide basic production packages of lights, sound, stage management and crew at the various locations around the Exhibition site. To find out more about how to participate in this event, contact Vanessa Morgan at (416) 422-4222, ext. 225 or e-mail her at **vmorgan@nbrscanada.com**.

The first announcement of the Call for Abstracts for next year's 10th International Conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled People (TRANSED 2004) has been issued. The conference will be held in the Japanese city of Hamamstsu from May 23 to 26, 2004 and is expected to serve as a forum to introduce new strategies for implementing economically sustainable accessible transportation and to encourage continued research in this field. The deadline for submission of abstracts is May 15, 2003 . Acceptance will be mailed to authors by August 31 with the deadline for submission of papers and poster outlines due on December 31. Guidelines for preparing papers and posters will be posted on the Web at **http://transed.jp** and further enquiries can be e-mailed to **info@transed.jp**. Enquiries in French should be addressed to the TRANSED 2004 Outreach Desk at the International Centre of Accessible Transportation: **access@icat-ciat.org** (Web: **www.icat-ciat.org**)

You can find information on major AT or disability-related conferences through the "Conference Listings in Assistive Devices" link on the ADIO Web site: **http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/adio**.

OUR WEB SITE

Our Web site can be found at **strategis.ic.gc.ca/adio** . At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

WHERE TO FIND US

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Mary Frances Laughton or Deb Finn
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4316 or 613-990-4297 fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
Internet: **adio@crc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Publications

Industrie Canada Industry Canada

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

June 2003

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 17

ARE YOU EXPORT READY?

ADIO is conducting research to identify Canadian AT companies that are currently exporting their products, systems and services or are ready to do so. The purpose is to make sure these companies are included when invitations go out to take part in government-sponsored trade missions to other countries and to ensure that AT firms are also brought to the attention of incoming missions from overseas.

Over the summer and fall, there will be a review of AT companies on the Canadian Company Capabilities database (CCC) to find out which companies are already engaged in export activities. If your company is not listed on CCC, now is the time to register. There's no charge to register and you are able to maintain the information on your own listing. If you register on CCC through the ADIO Web site (**http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/adio** and click on the menu choice, "Register, Update or View Canadian Assistive Device Companies"), you will automatically show up in our listing of AT companies.

The next step will be to get in touch with those Canadian AT companies we have on our distribution list (the one used to send out this newsletter) and find out if they are exporters. Of course, we will also do our best to encourage them to list with CCC too.

When we have completed this research, we will forward a contact list to our colleagues in the International Business Development Group here at Industry Canada so that they can include these companies when trade opportunities arise, just as they do now for other high-tech industries.

LIBRARY
OCT 09 2003
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Canada

WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY (WSIS)

Industry Canada, through the Spectrum, Information Technology and Telecommunications sector, has been co-chairing with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) Canadian preparations for the upcoming World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). The WSIS will be the first Summit to examine the Information Society and, in particular, the enabling effect of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) on social and economic development.

The WSIS will be held in two phases with the first Phase taking place in Geneva, December 10-12, 2003 and the second Phase, in Tunis, November 16-18, 2005. Heads of State, as well as senior representatives from the Private Sector and Civil Society, will participate in this UN Summit which will be held under the patronage of Kofi Annan. As is usually the case for Summits, the WSIS will adopt a Declaration of Principles and a Plan of Action with a view to influencing the global agenda in this area. Negotiations on these two documents are in progress.

The Summit is seeking to build on the results of important initiatives, including the G8 DOT Force, the UN ICT Task Force and the New Economic Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD), to develop a broad consensus and cooperative way forward in building a truly inclusive Information Society.

The main objective is to ensure that isolated areas and developing nations, most notably those in Africa, have access to a modern ICT infrastructure to support their efforts towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals related to health, education, poverty alleviation and sustainable economic development.

The various themes discussed at the WSIS will focus on the following key challenges for building a global Information Society: 1) the need to develop international frameworks in areas such as trade, Internet governance, Intellectual Property Rights, standards, and cyber-security; 2) the use of ICTs to help bridge digital divides worldwide. Related themes will include infrastructure, access and connectivity, capacity-building, as well as local content and entrepreneurship.

In keeping with the main themes of the WSIS Plan of Action, Canada will be looking to promote/announce specific initiatives that build on programs/projects

with international partners either already underway or about to be launched. Canada's experience and expertise in implementing an Information Society will also be showcased during the Summit via our participation in a number of side events, and through a Canadian Pavillion and a "Compendium" of Canadian success stories and best practices to be released during the Summit.

Industry Canada, in partnership with many other departments (the Canadian Coordinating Committee or CCC) including DFAIT, the International Development Research Centre, the Canadian International Development Agency, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Canadian Heritage, Status of Women Canada and the Privy Council Office, will be launching shortly a public consultation on the WSIS. Our main goal is to make key groups of stakeholders aware of the Summit. We are also seeking to gather Canadian experiences and best practices involving ICTs as tools for development to be highlighted in the Compendium. To this end, a public consultation KIT was developed and will be sent to stakeholders, most likely by the end of June. The KIT will also be available on the Government of Canada Website for the Summit **www.wsis-smsi.gc.ca**. Members of the CCC identified a list of key stakeholders to be consulted on the WSIS. To date, our list of stakeholders is comprised of 282 organizations representing youth, women, aboriginals and academia. Private sector consultations are primarily being carried out on a bilateral basis and through industry associations, including the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Council for International Business.

How Can Canadian Companies Participate?

Participation can be through the Canadian delegation, through the Canadian Chamber of Commerce which is associated with the International Chamber of Commerce, or on an independent basis with the Summit organizers or the ICT4D Platform.

For further information contact: Michael Tiger,
Senior Policy Advisor, International Telecommunications, Industry Canada,
300 Slater St., Ottawa K1A 0C8
Tel. (613) 990-4242; Fax (613) 998-4530; E-mail: **Tiger.Michael@ic.gc.ca**

For Canadian information: **www.wsis-smis.gc.ca**
For the main ITU site: **www.itu.int/wsis**
For the ICT4D Platform: **www.ict-4d.org**

ADIO REPORT ON CSUN 2003

For the 9th year, Industry Canada, through the Assistive Devices Industry Office, hosted the Canada booth at the CSUN conference in Los Angeles. As always, the Maple Leaf was the meeting place for Canadians and those wanting information on Canada and its AT industry.

The booth was staffed by Mary Frances Laughton and Deb Finn with help from Heather Christy and Ed Carey of Canadian Heritage and Bill Shackleton, a TBS consultant. The ADIO booth provided space for 23 companies to display their brochures. Some of these companies had not been aware of the existence of CSUN until they received our invitation to display their product literature. The range of products represented in our booth was far greater than we have ever had before, including ergonomic kitchen cabinetry, wheelchair lifts for motor vehicles, one-touch cellphone, braille producers, accessibility (physical and electronic) consultants, researchers, devices for blind and partially sighted people, and software developers to name a few. Some of these companies were among the 13 Canadian booths on the showfloor.

Besides brochures and some information on Web-4-All, we also demonstrated AT-Links, the APT and the newly-launched Health Technologies Exchange (HTX) website, a partnership between MEDEC, ORTC, AOMM and Industry Canada.

The conference launched with its customary International reception. There were over 38 countries represented at the Conference. A number of first time Canadian attendees were at both the reception and the conference.

The keynote speaker on the first day was Ray Kurzweil, a visionary inventor and leader in the field of AT. An audience of over 1500 sat riveted as he talked about the exponential growth of technologies and the potential impact on people with disabilities.

We found the conference to be a bit less exciting than years past. This could have been a result of the economic downturn or the beginning of the War.

There were no major announcements at this year's conference, either by Canadian companies or others. Canada's technologies were well regarded and

the booths were steady with traffic.

We were not able to get to any of the papers presented but we did hear mixed reviews on the presentations from our colleagues. Some were excellent, some blatant product sales and some ho-hum. In several sessions, Canadian technology was referenced as being worldclass.

The kinds of questions fielded at the booth ranged from taxation, immigration, repatriation, AT policy to human rights rules. There was also a slight increase in the number of foreign companies seeking advice on locating Canadian distributors for their products. A number of people have been added to the Accessible News database and all promised information and contacts have been forwarded.

Information, including some suggestions for new adaptations and uses for established products, has been forwarded to some of the companies who placed their product literature in our booth.

Booth 336 has been booked for the 2004 CSUN.

OTTAWA WEB CONSULTANT AN IT HERO

Chuck Letourneau, President of Starling Access Services, has been chosen as one of this year's local IT Heroes. This honour was bestowed by the Information Technology Association of Canada during Canada's Information Technology Week, May 2-11. Mary Carman, the Associate Assistant Deputy Minister for Spectrum, Information Technology and Telecommunications, made the presentation representing the Honourable Allan Rock.

Chuck has been a tireless contributor to the development of web accessibility standards, including the Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium, work that has made it possible for people with disabilities around the world to enjoy more equitable access to the Web.

In addition to his professional activities, Chuck has also contributed his expertise to the Parent Resource Centre and Citizen Advocacy Ottawa.

UofT WINS OPEN SOURCE AWARD IN FRANCE

A dynamic on-screen keyboard for UNIX and UNIX-like operating systems has won first place in the Accessibility category at the first-ever Trophées du Libre, at the "Concours Internationale du Logiciel Libre" (International Free Software Competition). The system, called GOK (GNOME On-screen Keyboard) was developed by a team from the University of Toronto. The award was made at a ceremony in Soissons, France on May 23.

GOK allows the user to launch applications using a keyboard specified in XML and to dynamically create keyboards that can be adapted to a user's current needs. The user can set key width, height and spacing, along with visual and auditory feedback on highlighting and selection.

For more information on GOK, visit **www.gok.ca**.

BRYTECH LAUNCHES COLOR TELLER

Ottawa-based Brytech (**www.brytech.com**) has launched a hand-held device that distinguishes 42 different colours. Called the Color Teller, it will help people who are blind or have a colour vision impairment to determine the colour of materials and objects, thereby enabling them to more easily match clothes, enjoy the pleasures of their gardens and homes, color code products for easy identification and much more.

Color Teller is only 6 inches long and weighs 3 oz, making it very portable. It provides information in the user's choice of English, French or Spanish and has an adjustable volume. It's also designed to be affordable, with a price tag of $250. To find out more about Color Teller or other Brytech products such as their talking bank note reader, Note Teller, visit their Web site or contact the company at (613) 731-5800, e-mail them at **inquiries@brytech.com** or write to them at 600 Peter Morand Crescent, Ottawa, Ontario K1G 5Z3.

NEWS BITS

Carl Raskin, the former Executive Director of GLADNET is now associated with a UK-based consultancy, Article 13.net Ltd (**www.article13.net**.) The company deals with anti-discrimination measures in the European Union.

Dr. Morris (Mickey) Milner, Director of the Ontario Rehabilitation Technology Consortium (ORTC) is pleased to announce that Mr. Peter Goodhand will be joining its management team. Mr. Goodhand's significant contributions in medical technologies coupled with his leadership positions in this area are expected to be an enormous asset to the ORTC as it moves forward to widen its capacity for advancing the medical and assistive technologies sector in Ontario. Mr. Goodhand's most recent position was President of MEDEC. Mr. Goodhand's involvement in the medical device and technology industry spans over 20 years. Prior to his appointment as President of MEDEC, Mr. Goodhand held numerous positions for leading medical device companies, both domestically and internationally. Mr. Goodhand's position will commence July 1, 2003.

A team from Natural Resources Canada won the 2003 Leadership in Service Innovation award from the Association of Professional Executives of the Public Service of Canada. The group developed a system called MVI (Mapping for the Visually Impaired) that incorporates Tactile Vision's superb tactile graphics with NRCan's Atlas of Canada, providing Web-based maps that can be converted to tactile form. MVI was launched as a Government On-Line initiative last year and features the only Web-based tactile and audio-tactile maps in the world. The maps can be printed on a conventional printer using special coated paper and a thermal image enhancer produces raised lines and textual information. The maps can also be used interactively with a touch pad. As part of the Web-4-All project, the technology is being made available in various CAP sites across the country.

Mary Frances Laughton presented "Reviewing Best Practices and Experience in Canada with some references to the USA" at the EU sponsored "Towards an Inclusive Information Society in Europe" held in Crete on April 11-12. Mary Frances was the only non-European at this symposium. A scanning of the local press indicated some coverage of the conference in specialised (ICT) columns, focusing on: e-Accessibility for all -- a basic target of the "eEurope" project; emerging technologies -- New Technologies support e-integration and should develop in such a way as to limit obstacles and facilitate accessibility; the value of broadband infrastructure; and commitment and continuous progress monitoring are necessary. The URL for the Ministerial Declaration from the summit: **www.eu2003.gr/en/articles/2003/4/11/2502/**

The Information Society Division of UNESCO is sponsoring a very interesting site and discussion forum on ICTs and Persons with Disabilities. It can be found at **www.unesco.org/webworld/index.shtml**. ADIO hopes that this site will link to our AT-Links site which can be found at **www.at-links.gc.ca**.

A mailing list has been established on web page testing by visually impaired users. The main purpose of this mailing list is to facilitate communication between web page developers and visually impaired users. Some of the goals include helping each group understand the other group better; identifying problems and exploring possible solutions based on the knowledge, experience and background of each of the groups; sharing new information as it is discovered; and providing a place where web page developers can ask for volunteers to test their web pages. (Currently, any web page developer can ask for volunteers, but this might change in the future as the group evolves.) If you wish to subscribe, send e-mail to: **uvip-web-test-subscribe@egroups.com**.

The International Commission on Technology and Accessibility - North America Region (ICTA-NA) is growing. Joining the executive - chair Betty Dion and regional vice chairs Carl Raskin (English Canada), Catherine Roy (French Canada) and Kate Seelman (U.S.A.) - are Ilene Zeitzer and Elaine Ostroff from the United States and Andres Balcazar from Mexico. ICTA-NA has recently been accredited as ICTA-Global's representative to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) (**www.itu.int/wsis/**). To learn more about ICTA-NA, or to join, you can visit their Web site (**www.starlingweb.com/ictana/**). Membership is free and includes a subscription to a quarterly newsletter.

The second IST call of the European Union's Sixth Framework Programme was published in the Official Journal of the European Union on June 17. Activities in this round include work on communications, computing and software technologies; addressing cmposability, scalability, reliability and robustness as well as autonomous self-adapation; and open development platforms for software and services. Visit **http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/calls_activity.cfm?ID_ACTIVITY=124** to find out more.

Memorial University of Newfoundland, the University of New Brunswick and Dalhousie University have launched a joint program in health services research for masters level students. The program opens up the possibility of having some

bright students do theses looking at medical and rehab technology and the way those services are provided. The students have to do a practicum in the summer term in the middle of their degree. Anyone able to place such a student should contact Dr. Edmund Biden, Associate Dean, School of Graduate Studies, University of New Brunswick, tel: 506-458-7154, e-mail: **biden@unb.ca**. Sponsors will be expected to pay the students they hire for this four-month term. More information on the program can be found on the Web at: **www.artc-hsr.ca**.

The CNIB Library awarded Microsoft Canada president Frank Clegg with the Dr. Dayton M. Forman Memorial Award, recognizing his extraordinary commitment to creating access to information for Canadians who are blind. Mr. Clegg received the award at an evening reception on June 20 hosted by The CNIB Library during the Canadian Library Association/American Library Association conference. Less than 5% of information in Canada ever makes it into formats such as braille or audio, and more than 600,000 blind or visually impaired Canadians depend on what little there is. Since 2001, Clegg has led the creation of the CNIB's new digital library, which will provide critical access to information. "Mr. Clegg's personal commitment and vigorous participation in the creation of the digital library for people who are blind or visually impaired are truly laudable," said Margaret McGrory, executive director of the CNIB Library. "We could not have asked for a better chair." "What a privilege to receive this honour," said Clegg. "I am truly humbled to receive an award that pays tribute to such an accomplished individual as Dr. Forman. Personally, I have learned more from my experience with the CNIB than any other in my career. I have been inspired by those whom I have met in the blind community and so grateful for this opportunity." Established in 1996 by the CNIB Library board of directors, the Dr. Dayton M. Forman Memorial Award recognizes outstanding leadership by individuals or organizations in the advancement of library and information services for Canadians who are blind or visually impaired. Past winners include The Alberta Library and Industry Canada.

Pulse Data International is this year's winner of the CNIB's Winston Gordon Award. The company was singled out for its BrailleNote device, which provides blind and low vision users with laptop and PDA functions. The BrailleNote line of devices also includes models that give users Web access and GPS navigation is also available. The award, which consists of a 24-carat gold medal and $15,000, was named in honour of Winston Gordon, an industrialist who lost his vision in early childhood and was a life-long supporter of the CNIB.

OUR WEB SITE

Our Web site can be found at **strategis.ic.gc.ca/adio** . At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

WHERE TO FIND US

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Mary Frances Laughton or Deb Finn
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4316 or 613-990-4297 fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
Internet: **adio@crc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Industrie Canada Industry Canada

Government Publications

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

Fall 2003

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 18

LIBRARY
FEB 05 2004
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

UNB RECEIVES FUNDING FOR eHEALTH DEVICES

The University of New Brunswick's Institute of Biomedical Engineering (IBME) is the recipient of support from the Atlantic Innovation Fund (AIF). The second round of AIF funding was announced in Fredericton on September 12.

Dr. Bernard Hudgins, the Director of IBME, will lead the project which will develop wireless eHealth devices for the rehabilitation field. IBME has been conducting research and developing technological tools for the medical and rehabilitation field for over thirty years, including the development of myoelectric control systems that have been incorporated into artificial limbs throughout the world.

Research in the areas of motion analysis and Telehealth/eHealth has been increasing over the last few years within the IBME, and this project is seen as an opportunity to merge the knowledge from both areas of expertise developing useful technology for the health care and research fields.

R&D will be conducted to produce motion analysis sensors and tools for use in health care and motion and performance analysis. The sensors will be incorporated into an appropriately fitting brace, material sleeve or an article of clothing and will be able to capture motion, shape, force and electromyographic information from joints such as knees and elbows. The motion will be reproduced from two angles (resulting in 3D representation) to address 2D limitations when using video analysis. These products will be developed using fibre optic measurement sensors and electronic accelerometers, electronic goniometers and load cells. This will include the combination of hardware and software which will evolve from wired motion analysis prototypes, to wireless motion analysis prototypes and eventually to extended-wear wireless prototypes.

The commercial partner, Measurand Inc., will provide its revolutionary 3D optic sensor products and technical, software and commercial support to the project. Other partners include the Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation, the Institute

for Rehabilitation Research and Development in Ottawa and two orthopaedic surgeons.

The project with a total estimated cost of $3 million will receive up to $1.9 million from AIF over five years. For more information, contact Dr. Bernard Hudgins, Director, Institute of Biomedical Engineering, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Tel: (506) 453-4966.

WESTERN FUNDING WILL HELP SET UP CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

The Neil Squire Foundation (NSF) has been awarded almost half a million dollars to lay the groundwork for a Centre of Excellence in enabling technology. The Honourable Stephen Owen, Secretary of State responsible for Western Economic Diversification Canada (WED) announced on August 26 that the Vancouver-based Foundation would receive $450,000 to implement a strategic business plan for the centre of excellence, to enhance network opportunities for the centre and to explore the marketablility of enabling technologies. Enabling technology is any item, piece of equipment, or product that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of individuals with physical disabilities. It is important both to people with disabilities and people who are growing older and who require more support from their environment.

The strategic plan will look at non-traditional funding mechanisms to create and maintain a community based Centre of Excellence in Enabling Technologies at the NSF and the Centre will bring together partners from business, academia and private/non-profit organizations to address such issues as the high social and economic cost experienced by people with disabilities and their families. The Centre will also look into the problems connected with the increasing cost and related impacts associated with the aging population, the need to contain healthcare costs through technology and the desire of people to live independently in the community for as long as they wish.

In addition to funding the strategic planning for the Centre, WED has included funding to assist the NSF in commercializing four of its enabling technologies. This is a departure from traditional funding initiatives, which seldom cover the later stages of commercialization such as intellectual property protection and management, the identification of commercial partners, technology transfer and market research. The NSF technologies to be supported are the Brain Computer

Interface, which focuses on using brain waves to activate and control electronic devices without the user actually moving; the Palm Development Program, to make handheld computers such as Palm PCs accessible to people with severe mobility disabilities; SARAW (Speech Assisted Reading and Writing), an adult literacy software package which is currently available and for which international markets will be sought; and Work Place Injury Reduction Research, which is intended to turn workplace injury reduction technology into commercial products.

Announcing the funding, Minister Owen made specific reference to the contribution that innovative enabling technologies will make to the quality of life for many Canadians. Gary Birch, the NSF's Executive Director, said "new innovations in enabling technology have the potential to play an ever increasing role in helping Canadians with disabilities live full independent lives within their communities. As Canadians age, these same independence enhancing technologies will play a key role in helping them to continue to live in the community. We're extremely pleased to receive this vital support from Western Economic Diversification Canada and proud to be considered a centre of excellence for assistive devices in Canada."

For more information, visit the Neil Squire Foundation Web site at **www.neilsquire.ca** or e-mail them at **info@neilsquire.ca**.

WORLD SIGHT DAY

On a bright and sunny October 9, on the steps of Parliament Hill, at 12:30 you would have seen a large group of folks wearing sunglasses and listening to Terry Kelly sing. You would also have noticed a large number of white canes and dog guides.

The occasion was World Sight Day and the message was that as much as 80% of blindness in countries around the world is avoidable through prevention programs or treatment. This message was reenforced by the launch of a CD-ROM tool kit that maps out a program that will save the vision of thousands of men, women and children and millions of dollars in health-care costs. The tool kit was developed in support of the international VISION 2020 resolution passed in May at the 56th World Health Assembly in Geneva. In Canada, the VISION 2020 partners are the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (**www.cnib.ca**),

Christian Blind Mission International, Eyesight International, ORBIS, the National Coalition for Vision Health, Seva and Operation Eyesight Universal.

Over 100 countries have started national VISION 2020 projects, but Canada is among those that do not have a national blindness protection program in place. MPs were invited to participate in the day and understand "the Power of the Dream". In addition to receiving the CD-ROM, they were given sunglasses to highlight one of the simple steps that can be taken to protect the eyes from damage caused by ultra-violet rays.

ACCESS GUIDE CANADA

The Canadian Abilities Foundation (CAF - **www.enablelink.org**) has launched a new on-line inventory of accessible facilities and services in comunities across Canada.

Access Guide Canada (ACG) covers everything from restaurants, places of worship, parks, accommodations and transportation to events and attractions. It makes it easier to find accessible services and resources. ACG also includes the Directory of Disability Organizations in Canada, making it an even more effective information tool.

Communities with information on local accessible resources are invited to contact are invited to contact Jason Bourque at 416-923-2885 extension 223 to be included in ACG.

CELLPHONES: LOOKING FOR A WAY IN

- by Deb. Finn

[**NOTE:** What follows is intended only to provide a snap-shot of some of the problems that people with different kinds of disabilities encounter when using information and communications technologies such as cellphones, and the discussions that have arisen over this issue. Nothing in this article should be interpreted as an indication of Industry Canada's opinion regarding this matter.]

Remember the days before everyone had a cellphone? Wouldn't you just be lost without one?

A growing number of Canadians look back fondly on the days before cellphones became a common commodity and far from being lost without one, they are to varying degrees lost with these devices. The reason is simple: most cellphones are not designed to meet the needs of users who have disabilities. For some users, cellphones provide no more functionality than that of traditional wireline telephones and design features that require vision, hearing or fine motor control can actually prevent people from using services that they pay for.

An Ottawa couple, Marie and Chris Stark, applied to the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), seeking a review and variance of CRTC94-19, the Commission's 1994 decision to allow the sale of terminal equipment such as telephones and the provision of services to be driven by market demand. It is the Starks' contention that the problem with this market-driven approach is that as new devices and services have been developed and introduced, they have failed to meet the needs of many customers who have disabilities, a group that is viewed by telecom companies as representing a very small market segment.

A complaint filed with the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) by Marie Stark in 1999 was unsuccessful in moving the CRTC to change its mind about leaving telecom services to the whim of market forces. The CHRC ruled that it lacked the jurisdiction to review the CRTC's forbearance decision or to order the CRTC to exercise its regulatory powers under the Telecommunications Act.

The Starks contend that while it may have made sense in the early 90s to allow mainstream market demand to drive the industry, telecommunications technology and the services available have changed significantly over the past decade and consumers with disabilities are being left farther and farther behind. They point out in their current submission that this lack of accessibility is found both in wireline and wireless equipment and they maintain that Canada's telecom service providers have not shown willingness to address the inequitable levels of service they offer their customers who have disabilities and those who do not. Four disability organizations, ARCH: A Legal Resource Centre for Persons with Disabilities, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), the National Federation of the Blind: Advocates for Equality (NFB:AE) and the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association have filed submissions with the CRTC, agreeing with the Starks that Canada's telecom regulator needs to do something to correct the situation.

"No attention is being paid to the needs of people with disabilities" says Cathy Moore, the Director of Consumer and Government Relations for the CNIB. "We'd like to see telecom companies show some interest in the needs of these people and treat them as the significant market segment they represent."

To be fair, there are some accessible devices on the market, but they are often expensive or harder to find and for the most part, they are aimed at deaf or hard of hearing users, not at those who are blind or have low vision. Geoff FitzGibbon, the CNIB's National Manager, Technical Aids told me that for blind or partially sighted users two approaches have been pursued for the provision of an audible interface: "either a dedicated device that is a phone/PDA with a specialized voice output interface, or a regular cell phone that is specially programmed with screen reader software that transcribes everything on the screen and identifies each key that is pressed.

The first option is very expensive, and manufacturers have resisted this approach because its market is small compared to the overall cell phone market. Given the cut-throat nature of that market and its speed of technological change, the manufacturers' reluctance can be understood. I know of only one phone like this on the market, and the sole Canadian outlet is at the following link **www.aroga.com**.

The second approach is less expensive, but the software can only be downloaded into the very latest cell phones, which not all North American networks yet support. The pioneer in the field is a Spanish company; their website can be accessed at the following link, **www.mobileaccessibility.com**."

Cellphones present different barriers to different people, not just the blind or people with low vision. In order to get a sense of the problems encountered by different cellphone users, I recently spoke to a trio of professionals, all of whom are technically savvy individuals and all of whom have disabilities. Here's what they told me:

Jim Sanders has been a cellphone user since 1990 and he recently bought a new model. He's been told that it has all the latest features, but ask him what they are and he says, "I don't know." Mr. Sanders, the President and CEO of the CNIB, is blind. He says that none of the menu choices that are available to a sighted person using his cellphone are presented orally. This leaves Mr. Sanders unable to program his phone. Someone who can see the screen has to enter

numbers in his directory or switch the phone from an audible ring to vibrate mode. The phone's text messaging capability is of no use to him either. "I can send and receive phone calls, but that's it".

Some cellphone service providers insist that customers, including those who are blind or partially sighted, can get sales staff to program features for them when they buy a new phone, but Mr. Sanders points out that you can't keep running back to the store, every time you need to add a new number to your speed dial or to reprogram your phone's features. You shouldn't have to rely on your family or friends to do those things for you either.

"What I'd like is to be able to use all the same features that a sighted person can use," he says. Given the technology today, that's a realistic wish. "I have access to all the features on my computer and the technology exists right now to give me a comparable level of access on my cellphone." When asked whether oral feedback of menus and text messaging can be done affordably, Mr. Sanders maintains, "if the technology to allow for oral feedback isn't built into the design of cellphones for the mass market, it will never be affordable."

The need to design accessibility features into products such as cellphones becomes an even greater concern when you consider the continuing convergence of devices such as cellphones, PDAs and computers. Mr. Sanders is deeply concerned that this convergence may result in what he describes as "a fairly significant chunk of bundled inaccessible technology." If that happens, he fears the impact this may have not only on people with disabilities, but on the rapidly aging society as a whole.

The trend towards smaller cellphones, with tiny keys and minuscule screens is also a problem for users with vision impairments. The size and font style on the screen can help or hinder users with limited vision.

Dr. Charles Laszlo is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, University of British Columbia, Chairman of assistive listening device firm ALDS Inc. and a hard of hearing person who has occasionally used family members' cellphones. "We made sure that the phones we had were such that they have special neckloop attachments available" he says. "Without that, I could not use ANY cellphone."

For Dr. Laszlo, the ability to program a cellphone to vibrate mode is helpful because the ring tones may not be audible to him. He also appreciates text messaging capabilities. "In the latest phone we have, the messaging feature that can be addressed from E-mail is very good."

People who have hearing loss have differing needs that may be addressed by divergent solutions. Dr. Laszlo explains: "People with different levels of hearing loss, and using different kinds of hearing aids, have different needs. For people like me, the inductive neckloop is essential. This helps two ways. First, it places the phone away from my hearing aid so that interference generated by the phone is eliminated. Secondly, it allows the phone to be coupled to my hearing aid non-acoustically. This eliminates the problem of external noise and the distortion caused by holding the phone to the hearing aid.

For people who don't have a T-switch and the ability to use a neckloop, and must hold the phone in proximity to the hearing aid, interference is a problem. Hearing aid manufacturers have been working on this, and some phone accessories are now available to alleviate the problem."

While it is possible to find cellphones that are hearing-aid compatible, it's important to do some homework before you go phone shopping, rather than assume the salespeople you deal with will understand the requirements of hard of hearing customers. Salespeople may not be aware that digital cellphones can emit radio frequency interference from their anntennas and magnetic interference from their batteries, which can make the devices unusable by hearing aid users or people who have had cochlear implants.

Dr. Laszlo's "wish list" of the features he would like to see available for cellphones is relatively short and easy to accomplish. "What I would like to see is a "universal" coupling between phone and hearing aid that would use infrared or some other short-range coupling method that would circumvent the need for acoustical coupling between phone and hearing aid. This is technically possible.

I would also like to see inductive neckloops that don't use hearing aid batteries, but cheaper, commonly available consumer types. The cost of using an inductive neckloop designed for cellphones is very high since up to three hearing aid batteries are required. The small increase in size would not be much of a problem."

Indeed, with the introduction of devices that include video cameras and game-playing capabilities, we are already beginning to see slightly larger cellphones entering the market again. Such added features are not really feasible on ultra-tiny models.

For years, Dr. Gary Birch has had a cellphone in his car, but it's only recently that he also acquired one for use elsewhere. He's the Executive Director of the Neil Squire Foundation, a not-for-profit organization engaged in research to create devices, technologies and products that facilitate and improve the quality of life for adults with severe physical disabilities, seniors and people recovering from illness or injury. Dr. Birch has quadriplegia, but has some use of his fingers.

"I use my cellphone to make and receive calls and to track previous calls", he says. "I haven't bothered with features such as the directory or games. The features I need I can use, but for someone with less dexterity than I have, they'd be impossible. A high-quad would need to modify the cellphone to access some of its features."

What's frustrating to Dr. Birch is that there used to be a line of cellphones on the market that had an external port that could be used to link adaptive technology to the device. "The port was really there for diagnostic purposes and we worked for a while with the manufacturer to develop interfaces that would allow the cellphone to be linked to other devices. The interfaces were even demonstrated to the company's head office, but in the next generation of cellphones that were produced, the manufacturers had dropped the external port. I don't think they did this for cost reasons -- the costs involved were minimal. I think that the people with decision-making power just didn't realize the importance the external port could have for people with disabilities."

For people with severe mobility disabilities, the integration or interconnection of cellphones and other information/communication devices has the potential to increase accessibility. For example, some cellphones have an infra-red or other type of interface to PDAs, which gives the user the ability to carry out a wider range of electronic transactions. But unless accessibility hooks are built into these devices to enable them to be controlled, they may further marginalize people with disabilities. "For the most part, to make it easier to adapt these devices you only need to make some simple changes to the firmware" Dr. Birch contends. "We're not talking about a big cost to the manufacturers."

Dr. Birch also suggests that in addition to providing cellphones with a "hook" that allows them to be adapted for use by people who need alternative input or output methods, manufacturers should also provide some support, including technical support, to organizations that are trying to make the adaptive devices that will improve cellphone accessibility. "With people relying more and more on these technologies, inaccessible design can make it harder for people with disabilities to get into the mainstream. What we need is a way in to adapt these devices."

So what is to be done? Regulation has been put in place in other countries, particularly in the United States and Australia to ensure that the needs of telecom consumers with disabilities are respected and met. It should be noted however, that the US Federal Communications Commission is currently dealing with complaints that American telecom companies continue to provide services that fail to meet the needs of blind and low vision customers. The FCC is also handling complaints over the continued incompatibility of cellphones with hearing aids.

There is still a belief among many organizations of and for people with disabilities that Canadian regulation is needed. ARCH links the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which prohibits discrimination on such grounds as disability with the regulatory power identified in the Telecommunications Act. ARCH insists that the Charter puts the onus on the CRTC to assert its jurisdiction to regulate the accessibility of telecom services and the sale of terminal equipment, including wireless devices. It should be noted that while the CRTC has some legal powers relating to the sale and lease of terminal equipment by telecommunications carriers providing services on their own networks, other terminal equipment vendors and manufacturers are outside the direct influence of the Commission. What's more, there has been some debate among telecom service providers such as Bell Canada and Telus over whether the CRTC is the appropriate body to address the terminal equipment issue, given that the Commission does not set technical standards for terminal equipment.

Any regulation of telecom equipment aimed at improving the accessibility of devices and services requires study and consultation, if it is to be done right. Both ARCH and the CNIB recommended that the CRTC undertake a study to determine the telecom needs of people with disabilities. On September 23, the Commission sent a letter to all parties involved in the Starks' application, announcing that a research consultant will be hired to prepare a report, building

on the information currently on the record of this decision. Once it has been submitted, the parties will be advised of the report's availability and a new procedure that takes into account the various requests on record will be implemented.

Meanwhile, Health Canada's Division of Aging and Seniors has granted a Population Health Fund contribution to the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) to conduct research that could help shed some light on how to improve the accessibility and usability of wireless and wireline phones. The CSA and the British Columbia Institute of Technology are working with older adults to determine how easily and effectively they can use common technologies after receiving some instruction. One of the items chosen for this testing is cellphones. The results of this research may be of benefit to the participants in the CRTC proceedings.

The CNIB believes telecom services must be made more accessible and that they need to be obtained easily. In their recent response to the CRTC's interrogatories the CNIB insisted that "the Telecommunications Act does mandate the CRTC to ensure that persons who are blind, deafblind or who have low vision have equal use and benefit from the telecommunications network at the same cost as other subscribers. The CRTC must ensure that terminals of all types are readily, easily and affordably available in real time in the marketplace...These terminals must be on the shelves of retailers, not as special or custom devices, but as an integral part of mainstream products offered to all Canadians."

NEWS BITS

In April, Dr. Gary Birch, the Executive Director of the Neil Squire Foundation and chair of the Minister of Industry's Advisory Committee was appointed to the Technical Advisory Committee on Tax Measures for Persons with Disabilities. The Technical Advisory Committee was established by John Manley, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Elinor Caplan, Minister of National Revenue, to address issues related to tax measures benefiting persons with disabilities. It has an 18-month mandate (April 2003 to October 2004) and information is posted to the committee's web site at **http://www.disabilitytax.ca**.

In July, Betacom Corporation announced a strategic marketing alliance with Lighthouse International, that will raise awareness of Betacom's VisAble (R) line of products by making use of Lighthouse's retail division, which includes three stores in the New York area and their significant mail order business across the US. The alliance will help to increase awareness of Betacom's products among the estimated 17 million North Americans who are blind or partially sighted. In September, Betacom announced that Brian McCarthy had stepped down as President and CEO of the company, to be replaced by interim CEO, Ralph Macdonald. Mr. McCarthy will continue to serve on Betacom's Board of Directors.

The Vision Australia Foundation has included Canadian references in the Web site it has developed in conjunction with the Australian Government to assist ICT companies in accessible procurement. Links to portions of ADIO's Accessible Procurement Toolkit are found on the Australian site, which can be found at: **www.it-test.org**.

The publishers of E-Access Bulletin, a British email newsletter on access to technology by blind and vision impaired people, invite everyone to visit their Web site at **www.headstar.com/eab** and to pass the URL along to anyone else who might be interested. The Bulletin is available free of charge and is supported by the U.K.'s Royal National Institute for the Blind.

Canada's Bone and Joint Decade participants publish a quarterly newsletter with each issue centred around a specific theme. The Fall issue will be on arthritis, the Winter will look at osteoporosis, the Spring focus will be on trauma and the Summer issue will deal with paediatrics. To find out more about the newsletter or the international Bone and Joint Decade initiative, contact Hazel Wood, Rehab Results Inc., 44 St. Joseph St., Suite 2701, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2W4, tel.: 416-323-6861 ext. 222 or 1-888-323-6861, fax: 416-323-1295, e-mail: **hwood@rehabresults.com**

Gwynneth Evans, the retired Director General of National and International Programs at the National Library of Canada, was honoured with the degree of Doctor of Sacred Letters by Trinity College, University of Toronto on September 4. The degree was bestowed in recognition of the contributions she has made throughout her career to the promotion of literacy and of access to print material in multiple formats. Ms Evans assisted in the establishment of the Council on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians and was also a

key player in the development both of the Adaptive Technologies in Libraries Program and the Large Print Publishing Program, funded by the federal government. She was responsible for launching the annual READ UP ON IT campaign to stimulate reading to children by parents. She was also president of the International Book Bank of CODE, the Canadian Organization for Development through Education, which is a non-governmental organization that responds to book requests and supports library development and publishing in local languages in Africa and the Caribbean. In 2002, Ms Evans received the Canadian Library Association Outstanding Service to Librarianship Award, in recognition of her professional and volunteer work in Canada and Africa.

The Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) was this year's winner of the CANARIE IWAY award in the Assistive Technology category. The award, which was presented in Toronto on September 22, honoured the CHS for the work it is doing to decrease the access barriers that prevent many deaf and hard of hearing Canadians from getting the fullest possible benefit from Internet-based information and interaction. With the recent creation of its Technical Initiatives department and the establishment of its commercial arm, Northwind Communications, the CHS has been a leader in researching ways to improve access for its clients to learning technologies over broadband, using the Internet to enhance its core services to clients and in such applications as using video-conferencing over the Internet to assist in communication in situations where sign language interpreters are not available locally. Industry Minister Allan Rock stated that "this year's IWAY award winners represent some of Canada's best minds in R&D and the application of technology...Their achievements in information technology are helping to put Canada on the map as a leading nation in information technology expertise, knowledge and skills."

On October 7, Belus Technology announced the release of the first WYSIWYG editor that outputs clean, XHTML 1.1 markup with no deprecated tags. The Toronto company says the product, called XStandard, is typically integrated into browser/Windows-based content management systems where business authors use it to manage rich content in any language (Chinese, Russian, etc.) The editor is compliant with the W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and supports images, lists, links, floats, drag-and-drop, file uploads and browsing of files in libraries. It distinguishes between layout and data tables, which are processed differently by screen readers and only permits formatting using CSS, which authors reference by selecting styles from a drop-down menu. Using CSS ensures the clean and complete separation of data and presentation required by

accessibility applications. XStandard also has a unique Screen Reader Preview which displays content in the linear manner in which screen readers see it and helps authors adjust content in view of accessibility. You can test drive and download XStandard at **http://xstandard.com/start**. XStandard Lite is free and XStandard Pro (with enhanced Web Services) is sold by license. For more information, contact Shelagh Nerney, Belus Technology Inc., at **shelagh.nerney@xstandard.com** or call her toll-free at 1-866-327-9965.

The Dragonfly Toy Company (**www.dragonflytoys.com**) of Winnipeg is getting set to launch software to help children learn basic computing skills, such as mousing, keyboarding and switch/scanning through play. The design and programming were accomplished with assistance from the National Research Council and from Western Economic Diversification Canada. To find out more, contact Dragonfly at **admin@dragonflytoys.com**.

Simple Abilities has developed a teaching assistance software package for students with cognitive disabilities, and their teachers. Called DANIEL, the package uses many components developed for voice recognition as well as reading and incorporating two-way text to voice and voice to text technology. DANIEL incorporates a host of features that enable the educator to stimulate sensory motivators as well as develop study, writing and reading skills. Version 1 of the software is currently being beta tested in two locations and preliminary results have been extremely encouraging. An updated version (V.2.0) is already in development that will add a number of advanced features to assist the student as well as the educator. To find out more, contact Jeff Hoogveld at **hoogveld@telus.net**.

A number of changes have been made to the Canadian Copyrights Database (CCD) that resides on the Web site of the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO). The CCD includes all copyrights which were registered as of October 1, 1991, pursuant to the Copyright Act as well as some registrations prior to 1991, for which certified copies had been requested. The new changes include optimized search capacities, improved display options and increased linkages within. This initiative is in response to CIPO's commitment to consult with its clients and provide them with high-quality, timely and cost-effective products and services that meet their needs. For more information, visit the Database at: **http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/cipo/copyrights/displaySearch.do?language=eng**.

The second issue of "Tools for Living Well" was published in August. This newsletter focusses on the use of assistive devices to help prevent falls and is funded by the Health Canada/Veterans Affairs Canada Falls Prevention Initiative. To find out more, contact the National Project Coordinator, Mary Lou Beaudreau at 1049 Old Colony Road, Kingston, Ontario K7P 1M3 or e-mail her at **boudreauml@cogeco.ca**.

Ontario March of Dimes, through its Directory for Accessibility (**www.accessibilitydirectory.ca**), has developed a single site where Ontario-based organizations that provide assistance in making the workplace accessible to employees and customers with disabilities can reach their clients. If your organization is based in the province of Ontario and you would like to join the directory, contact Wei Ke at **WKe@dimes.on.ca**.

On July 1, VoicePrint launched its new archival system at **www.nbrscanada.com**. The archive contains articles from hundreds of Canadian publications, read by VoicePrint's volunteer readers and can be accessed in audio format. The public will be able to use the archive to hear programming they missed or to access information for future reference. "This is the first audio archival system of its kind in Canada", Vanessa Carlisle, VoicePrint's Outreach Associate said. "The potential of this service in meeting the needs of 3.2 million vision- and print-restricted Canadians is huge."

Deb. Finn will give a presentation called "Standards and Inclusion - A Canadian Perspective" at the 2004 Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) conference. ATIA takes place in Orlando, Florida from January 14 to 17.

OUR WEB SITE

Our Web site can be found at **strategis.ic.gc.ca/adio** . At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

WHERE TO FIND US

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Mary Frances Laughton or Deb Finn
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4316 or 613-990-4297 fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
Internet: **adio@crc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Government Publications

Industry Canada Industrie Canada

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

Spring 2004

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 19

LIBRARY
JUL 15 2004
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Visit us at CSUN

Once again, ADIO will have a booth at the annual Technology & Disability Conference, which is presented by California State University, Northridge (CSUN) in Los Angeles. If you are attending CSUN, drop by and say hello. You'll find us in Booth Number 336 in the Marriott Hotel's main exhibit hall. Just look for the booth with the big Canadian flag.

This year, our booth will feature AT-Links, the Accessible Procurement Toolkit and Web-4-All. We will also have product literature on display from various Canadian AT companies and organizations.

The CFI Provides Major Boost for Research in Canada

Canada's research community will receive a major boost thanks to a $585.9 million investment from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI: **www.innovation.ca**). This investment will help support cutting-edge research infrastructure in areas of strategic importance to Canada such as health, the environment, nanotechnology, sustainable communities, and the new knowledge economy. The "Intelligent Design for Adaptation, Participation and Technology (IDAPT): Innovative Rehabilitation for People in Challenging Environments" project, managed by Dr. Geoff Fernie at the University of Toronto's Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, will receive $7,258,556 in CFI funding.

Prime Minister Paul Martin, joined by the Honourable Lucienne Robillard, Minister of Industry and the CFI's President and CEO, Dr. David Strangway, today announced infrastructure support for 126 projects at 57 Canadian universities, colleges, research hospitals, and other non-profit research institutions. They were joined for this announcement by the Honourable Joe Fontana, Parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister with emphasis on Science and Small Business.

"Individual ingenuity and creativity are key drivers of our economy. This means an education system second to none and a commitment to the pursuit of excellence and innovation," said Prime Minister Martin. "With today's announcement, the CFI has taken the country's research capacity to the next level and further encouraged innovation, research and development in Canada."

"Our support of cutting-edge research infrastructure is transforming Canada's research landscape and increasing our international competitiveness," said Dr. Strangway. "The CFI is empowering its institutions to develop partnerships with their province, their municipal governments, the private sector, and the volunteer sector which in turn will secure Canada's position as a global leader in innovation."

"This CFI investment will help our research institutions capitalize on excellent research opportunities that draw on the local, national and international intellectual capital", said Minister Robillard. "These infrastructures will create opportunities, fuel the development of industrial clusters and lead to the commercialization of our research to benefit all Canadians."

The $585.9 million investment has been awarded through two funds: $450.7 million under the Innovation Fund enabling institutions to strengthen their research infrastructure in all areas of research, including the social sciences and humanities; and $135.2 million under the Infrastructure Operating Fund which assists universities with the incremental operating and maintenance costs associated with new infrastructure projects. Of the 126 Innovation Fund projects announced on March 8, nine projects are national and many are regional and multi-institutional.

In addition, following the review of project outlines, the Board is inviting hospitals to submit complete applications for 19 projects under the CFI's Research Hospital Fund (RHF) by May 31, 2004. These projects will be associated to successful projects under the Innovation Fund that will enhance hospital, regional and national capacity for internationally competitive health research. Indeed, the RHF is designed to support large scale infrastructure projects that will support research that can be translated into improved health for Canadians and more effective health services and products.

The CFI's investments of over $2.5 billion in research infrastructure over the past seven years are having a significant impact on research in this country by:

helping to foster a climate for knowledge transfer activities, enhancing our research productivity, helping to attract and retain excellent researchers, and training highly qualified people. The research enabled by this infrastructure is also generating benefits for Canada and improving our quality of life.

The Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) is an independent corporation created in 1997 by the Government of Canada to fund research infrastructure. The CFI's mandate is to strengthen the ability of Canadian universities, colleges, research hospitals, and other non-profit institutions to carry out world-class research and technology development that will benefit Canadians.

CRTC Licence Renewals and Accessibility

On January 21, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) issued a number of licence renewals that will provide Canadians with sensory disabilities more accessible television programming.

The broadcast licence for VoicePrint Canada was renewed for the period from March 1 to August 31, 2010. VoicePrint is the English-language audio programming service that provides national and local news articles, features and audio theatre to print-disabled Canadians. The service reaches more than 8 million homes and listeners can access VoicePrint via satellite, cable and direct-to-home services. Many users access VoicePrint on the secondary audio programming (SAP) channel on CBC's Newsworld channel.

In addition to renewing the licence, the CRTC also gave VoicePrint permission to increase its maximum wholesale rate by three cents per subscriber per month to a new rate of four cents per subscriber per month. The National Broadcast Reading Service (NBRS), which is the not-for-profit charity that was set up to administer VoicePrint in 1989, stated in its submission that the increase in the wholesale rate would provide more predictable and reliable funding for VoicePrint and enable it to eliminate its reliance on grants, donations and the benefits offered by broadcasters as part of ownership transactions.

NBRS made commitments to the CRTC to expand the amount of local programming available on the system through such initiatives as the establishment of centres in 100 communities across Canada using a web-based computer program to produce local programming in a cost-effective manner, the

increase of regional programming from 30 minutes to 60 minutes a day and the establishment of a regional centre in Halifax to provide programming reflecting Atlantic Canada. NBRS also undertook to decrease reliance on volunteers by hiring paid staff on a part-time basis in 50 of the proposed local program centres. These paid staff would organize local volunteers and be responsible for outreach at the local level and liaison with local broadcast distributors such as cable and satellite service providers. Paid staff will also make house calls in the community to help users access the SAP channel.

The same day that the CRTC granted VoicePrint's licence renewal, they also granted licence renewals for 21 specialty channels. Here are some of the highlights:

YTV will be required to caption not less than 60% of all programming aired during the broadcast day, beginning no later than September 1 2004 and increasing this to 90% of the programming it carries, beginning no later than September 1 2008. What is significant about this is that this captioning requirement includes programming aimed at pre-schoolers. In its previous licence, YTV had previously been exempt from having to caption broadcasts targeted to pre-schoolers. Preschool programming has now been included in the requirement in part to ensure that parents are able to access the programming their children watch. YTV is also expected to provide a minimum of two hours of described video programming per week, beginning September 1 2005 and increasing that to a minimum of three hours a week by 2008. In fulfilling this condition, a minimum of 50% or the required hours must be original to the service.

CHUM Limited's Star!-TV was one of several specialty services that asked for an exemption from the requirement to caption at least 90% of its programming aired during the broadcast day. The CRTC turned down this request, stating that offering closed captioning is part of the expense of holding a broadcast licence. This is the response that was consistently given to English-language specialty services that sought exemption from the 90% captioning requirement.

(It should be noted that in the past, a 100% captioned broadcast day had been a condition of licence for Canadian broadcasters with annual revenues over $10 Million, but the CRTC has come to recognize "that requiring 100% captioning at all times by condition of licence may not be reasonable. A 90% obligation provides some flexibility to cover unforeseen circumstances (such as late

delivery of captions, technical malfunctions, or the lack of availability of captions for programs acquired outside North America), or programming where captioning may not be feasible, such as third-language programming.")

CHUM Limited's licence for Space: The Imagination Station was also renewed and as part of its licensing conditions, the station will be expected to provide a minimum of two hours of described video programming per week by September 1 2005 and increasing to a minimum of three hours a week by September 1 2008. In its licence application, CHUM actually pledged to exceed these minimum requirements for described video, stating that it would be able to broadcast three hours of described programming per week beginning this September and increasing it to four hours a week in September 2006.

Also expected to start providing at least two, increasing to three, hours of described programming per week over their respective licence terms are Prime TV, The Comedy Network and History Television. CTV Newsnet was informed that the CRTC expects the specialty channel to provide audio description wherever appropriate and to ensure that the audio description offered is of good quality. This comment was made in response to a number of complaints the Commission received from viewers regarding the quality of Newsnet's audio description.

A number of French-language specialty channels have also been given the go-ahead to continue broadcasting. Télétoon will be required to close caption 75% of all French-language programming no later than September 1 2004, 80% by September 2005, 85% by September 2007 and 90% by September 2008. (The Teletoon, the English-language sister channel to Télétoon, is required to caption 90% of its programming by September 1 2004.) Astral Broadcasting Group's Canale Vie will also be required to gradually increase the percentage of captioning of all its programming to at least 65% by September 2008. The Commission also told Astral that at the time of its next licence term, Canal Vie will be required to expand this percentage to 90% of its broadcast day. Last but not least, Groupe TVA inc.'s Le Canal Nouvelles will be required to close caption at least 80% of its programs in the first year of the new licence term, rising to 90% by September 2008.

Real-Time Captioning Lets Late-Deafened People Participate in Meetings
- by Leo Valdes, Vision Office Support Services Ltd.

Unlike their sign-language trained colleagues, persons who lose their hearing later in life are not as prepared for face-to-face communication. This may be the case for many seniors in an ageing Canadian population, who have relied on technologies like e-mail and closed captioning to stay in touch.

Late in 2002, Disabled Persons International Canadian representative Steve Estey's hearing condition deteriorated so that he could no longer use his state-of-the-art hearing aid. Forced to communicate by instant messaging and text chat, Steve wondered how he would participate in upcoming United Nations meetings on the rights of persons with disabilities.

Early in 2003, Visual Voice Captions, a B.C. based communication facilitation company, was given the opportunity of providing Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART), also commonly referred to as realtime captioning, to Steve in a regional meeting of the Americas. CART uses realtime technology that translates shorthand - much like that provided in courtrooms - into English. This technology, which is currently used to close caption live broadcasts, allowed Steve to participate fully, and contribute in the landmark meeting.

Visual Voice Captions also provided CART services to the hard of hearing and late-deafened Non-Governmental Organization members as well as a panelist presenter at the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on a UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, held in New York last June 2003. Participants in workshops and meetings from Landmine Survivors Network, Disabled Peoples' International and Centre for International Rehabilitation also benefitted from CART provided by Visual Voice Captions.

Visual Voice Captions is pleased to team with Vision Office, another B.C.-based company, to provide streaming descriptive video, i.e., webcasting of video images alongside CART, for both the visual and hearing impaired. Webcasts can range from international human rights meetings to disability sporting events such as the 2010 Olympics and Paralympics in Vancouver 2010.

Further information and details on CART can be found at:
www.VisualVoiceCaptions.com.

ATutor: Accessible Online Learning

- by Greg Gay, Adaptive Technology Resource Centre, University of Toronto

The University of Toronto's Adaptive Technology Resource Centre has developed a standards compliant, open source Web-based learning environment called ATutor. Designed with accessibility and adaptability in mind, administrators can install or update ATutor in minutes. Educators can quickly assemble, package, and redistribute Web-based instructional content, and conduct their courses online. Students learn in an adaptive, accessible learning environment.

After several years of teaching online, using a number of the popular commercial Web-based e-learning systems, the creators of ATutor came to the realization that these systems were all about managing courses and instructional content. Very little, if any attention was given to creating learning environments that catered to the learning tendencies of the students who used them. Many learners, and instructors, found the complexity and ridged structuring of these systems non-conducive to learning. And, if assistive technologies were being used to learn or create courses online, users would find that much in these learning environments was inaccessible to them, or at best somewhat accessible but difficult to use.

Based in cognitive science, and created at a centre where accessibility is the guiding philosophy, ATutor was developed to fill the accessibility/adaptability void created by other e-learning systems, creating a "Learning Content Management System" (LCMS) that was inclusive to all who might use it; it allows learners, instructors, and administrators, on slow internet connections, using older computers, or using assistive technology to access the Web, to participate fully in online learning activities.

As an adaptive learning environment the ATutor interface is extremely flexible, allowing users to configure the environment to suit their needs. Perceptual elements can be customized, adding graphical representations of tools, adding text alternatives for graphics, or adding direct keyboard access so ATutor can be used through the kinesthetic senses (i.e. by touch). Structural elements can also be customized, allowing learners to navigate through instructional content in a global, hierarchical, or sequential fashion.

As an accessible learning environment ATutor conforms with international accessibility standards, complying with the W3C Web Content Accessibility

Guidelines (WCAG 1.0), as well as the Canadian Common Look and Feel and the U.S. Section 508 accessibility standards. Preset settings allow users to apply an accessibility theme that strips away all the non-essential features of the interface, optimizing ATutor for use with screen readers and other similar assistive technologies.

ATutor is also the first open source system of its kind to adopt international content packaging standards, making it possible to import and export interoperable content. This is a big step for open source e-learning systems, allowing instructors who were once locked into expensive commercial systems, to move their content from those systems into an economical, more user friendly system.

As an open source tool ATutor is available at no cost for most purposes; it's free! The underlying technology on top of which ATutor runs is also open source, and free for most uses. With these roots in open source it is possible to setup a sophisticated Web based learning environment at a fraction of the cost associated with implementing similar commercial systems.

As of this writing ATutor 1.3.1 was the current released, with the primary goal in this version of adding interoperable content packaging and an updated version was expected shortly. Current development includes the creation on an interface that connects ATutor to The Inclusive Learning Exchange (TILE) learning objects repository, a project whose goal is to create a public repository of accessible e-learning content. TILE support will be available in the Spring or Early summer of 2004. Also part of the TILE project is the creation of a Web-based content accessibility assessor, which will also be linked into ATutor, allowing content developers to review the accessibility of the content they create.

Other accessibility related development currently underway includes the creation of ATalker, an ATutor add-on text-to-speech server that allows users to hear the environment as they navigate through it, and submit blocks of text content to the server to be returned in an audio stream that can be played in most common multimedia applications. ACollab is another accessible add-on for ATutor: a group work environment and file sharing application that allows learners to collaborate at a distance, and generate documentation, write shared papers, or work together on group projects. The inaugural release of ACollab was announced at the beginning of February.

ATutor's development is supported in part by the Learning Disabilities Resource Community (**www.ldrc.ca**) and Federally by the Office of Learning Technology (**http://olt-bta.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/**). For additional information about ATutor visit the ATutor Web site **http://www.atutor.ca**. For more about the TILE project visit the TILE Web site **http://www.barrierfree.ca/tile/**

News Bits

Congratulations to Lawrence Euteneier, Manager Web-4-All, Smart Communities, who has been awarded the Head of the Public Service Award for Excellence in Service Delivery. The award was made in recognition for his work on Web-4-All, a suite of applications that can be used to tailor Internet access methods (input and output) to individual users in such public venues as libraries and CAP sites. Users' access preferences are recorded on a smart card so that the user can link independently to the Internet from any place that has Web-4-All installed. The award was presented by Alex Himelfarb, Clerk of the Privy Council, at a ceremony on December 1, 2003.

Tash Inc.'s line of flexible mounting arms were worth a second look at this year's Assistive Technology Industry Association conference in Orlando, Florida. Designed in Canada, these arms can be adjusted to suit the needs of any user with ease and reliability. In addition to being strong but light, they are also very graceful in appearance, proving that assistive devices don't have to sacrifice form for function.

Dr. Geoff Fernie, Vice President, Research at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, has been honoured by MEDEC - Canada's Medical Device Technology Companies. The MEDEC Award for Medical Achievement was awarded to Dr. Fernie on February 12. Dr. Fernie was recognized for the work he and his team have undertaken to develop a number of award-winning assistive devices for people with mobility disabilities, including the Staxi Transport Chair system used in such places as many major airports. In addition to his work at the Rehabilitation Institute, Dr. Fernie is a professor in the Department of Surgery at the University of Toronto and has cross-appointments in the Institute of Biomaterials and Biomedical Engineering and the Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Science as well as the U of T's Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Departments.

A recent accessibility survey of French-langauge Web sites showed that many performed poorly when evaluated for compliance with Priorities 1 and 2 of the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. The survey, which was conducted jointly by the Quebec Foundation for the Blind, W3Qébec and the Nazareth & Louis-Braille Institute revealed that 84% of the 200 sites surveyed were non-compliant. About 95% of the inaccessible sites had HTML or CSS programming errors, 77% provided no alt text for graphics, buttons and maps and 77% either lacked headers or used them in illogical order. The survey tested Web sites from federal and provincial governments, corporations and the disability services sector. The best performers were disability services, rehabilitation centres and disability organizations. The federal government sites were fourth overall and the Québec government sites came in 10th out of 17. The worst performers were in the subcategories of sports and leisure, arts and culture and careers and employment. The study, which is only available in French, can be found at:
www.accessibiliteweb.org/accessibiliteweb.htm.

Sinclair-Nicolson has installed NexTalk-VM computer-based TTYs in Industry Canada's Strategis call centre. The company reports that the system has also been installed at Natural Resources Canada and more installations in federal government sites are expected in the near future.

Microcomputer Science Centre Inc. has developed KBook, a highspeed scanning interface for use between a Canon DR-5080C scanner and the Kurzweil 3000 reading software. KBook streamlines the process of scanning a book, converting it to Kurzweil, performing a quality check on the Kurzweil files, burning the files to CDs and creating book specific CD labels and tracking scanned books. To find out more, call the Microcomputer Science Centre at 1-800-290-6563 (fax: 905-629-2321, TTY: 905-629-4369) or visit their web site at **www.microscience.on.ca**.

Federal Elevator has just completed several installations of Accessibility Elevators in high profile projects. One of them is the new AOL Time Warner building in New York City where 6 residential elevators with special accessibility features were installed. The other one is the Belaya Gora project in Moscow where 2 specially designed elevators were supplied. The Company products have now been installed in more than 25 countries. For additional information, please contact Richard Piatti, P. Eng. at Federal Elevator or visit their website **www.federalelevator.com**.

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Novartis Opthalmics, Pfizer, AMD Alliance International and the Canadian Institute of Health Research were the presenting sponsors of a symposium called "The Cost of Blindness: What it means to Canadians" in Toronto, January 31 and February 1. The purpose of the symposium was to establish a coordinated, nationwide approach to secure a body of research that will indicate measures that must be taken for Canada to reduce both the financial and social impacts of vision loss.

Our heartiest congratulations go to James Sanders, President and CEO of the CNIB, who was named a Member of the Order of Canada in January. Mr. Sanders also serves on the Minister of Industry's Advisory Committee on Assistive Devices and Persons with Disabilities. The citation naming him to the Order of Canada stated that "he has been tireless in his efforts to improve the quality of life for visually impaired, deafblind and blind people living in Canada and around the world.... An energetic lobbyist, he fought to preserve the use of Braille while encouraging the organization and its clients to embrace and harness technological advances like computers. By helping to open up more avenues of accessibility, he has provided new options for individuals seeking greater independence."

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **strategis.ic.gc.ca/adio** . At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Mary Frances Laughton or Deb Finn
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4316 or 613-990-4297 fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
Internet: **adio@crc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Industry Canada Industrie Canada
Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

NOV 02 2004
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Summer 2004

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 20

CSUN Wrap-Up

2004's Technology & Disability conference (CSUN) in the Los Angeles Airport area drew nearly 4,000 participants over its four-day run. Once again, there was a very visible contingent of Canadians exhibiting, presenting and attending the show. Not only Canadians were sporting the Canadian flag because almost everyone comes by our booth looking for their flag pin.

George Kerscher, co-chair with Mary Frances Laughton of the WAI Steering Council, won the Trace Center's Catalyst Award. George has been a stalwart in the field of access to information for many years. He in fact coined the term "print-disabled".

Visitors to the Industry Canada booth were steady throughout the conference and interest in Canadian assistive technology, products, systems and services was high. There were 12 companies or organizations from Canada on the showfloor and over 35 Canadian speakers. This year, 23 companies took us up on our offer to display their company information in Booth 336, the Industry Canada booth. Lots of folks were looking for Tactile Vision who had been on the floor in years past but decided to take a break this year. Almost all the literature that we had was picked up over the course of the show and people were constant in their positive remarks about Canadian products and services. In addition to this literature, we demoed our Accessible Procurement Toolkit (**www.apt.gc.ca**), AT-Links (**www.at-links.gc.ca**) and Lawrence Euteneier demoed Web-4-All.

One Canadian company whose product literature was on display in our booth, Curo Interactive, made extensive use of our very visible location as a rendez-vous point for meetings with prospective partners and clients. Indeed, by simply having a place for parties to meet, this company was able to arrange several important meetings in Ottawa after CSUN. (That large Canadian flag and our distinctive red and white draperies in a sea of blue booths make us easy to spot in the exhibit hall and we are always happy to have our industry representatives make use of our location in support of their business networking activities.)

We also gave a representative from VoicePrint the opportunity to spend time in our booth and assess whether CSUN would be a good trade show venue for them to exhibit in future years. As it turned out, this person was able to determine that CSUN would not be a good venue for her organization to concentrate its promotional activities, but she did find it a valuable conference to attend and establish contacts with other Canadian businesses.

Madentec launched three new products in its Discover line: Discover: Switch USB for Windows, Discover: Template Maker and Discover: Setup Library Volumes 1 and 2. We are also pleased to report that Madentec's Tracker has been integrated in several of Prentke Romich's communication aids, including the Vanguard II and II Plus, Pathfinder Plus, Vantage Plus and SpringBoard Plus.

Visuaide celebrated its 15th anniversary by winning yet another head-to-head DAISY format talking book reader competition and by throwing a well-attended party on the Friday night. Their booth was very busy with visitors eager to check out the latest in the company's Victor talking book readers, including the very sleek and portable Victor Vibe, as well as Visuaide's ever-growing line of Trekker navigational aids.

Compusult was demoing its Jouse 2, another Industry Canada spinoff product.

Afforda-Speech was demoing for the first time.

Matias once again was leading the pack in one-hand keyboards and the mounting systems from Daedalus wowed the crowd.

Braille Jymico ran out of its Formula One information.

At the keynote breakfast on Wednesday morning, each table in the ballroom at the Hilton Hotel had brochures from Hewlett Packard, which trumpeted Visuaide's Trekker GPS system which can be used on the HP iPAQ Pocket PC. The keynote speaker this year was Vint Cerf, one of the inventors of the Internet Protocol. He gave a fascinating speech with lots of reference to assistive technologies. He has first-hand experience as his wife is deaf. His speech is available at **www.abletv.com** .

Tash announced their acquisition of the manufacturing and marketing rights to the Imperium line of licensed products, completing the line of Environmental Control Units offered by Tash.

The large print scientific calculator that Industry Canada helped to fund some years ago was once again on display. This time, it was in the Ontario Rehabilitation Technology Consortium's booth being distributed by a new Canadian company, Sight Enhancement Systems.

Clearly, Canadian companies are developing products and systems that international industrial partners recognize as must-haves to integrate with their own technology! More information and the proceedings of CSUN can be found at: **www.csun.edu/cod** .

New Company Formed for Low Vision Market

Sight Enhancement Systems has been established in Waterloo, Ontario to design and manufacture products that will assist individuals with low vision. Working closely with researchers and low vision clinicians at the University of Waterloo, Centre for Sight Enhancement, and the Ontario Rehabilitation Technology Consortium (ORTC) this new company has commenced an aggressive product development program.

Sight Enhancement Systems promotes a rapid product development process where the talents of specialized design engineering and manufacturing teams are focused to achieve early product realization and fast time-to-market. The company recently completed the development of a new visibility-enhanced scientific calculator for people with low vision called the "Sci-Pod". Other innovative, digital imaging products are under development.

On June 1 2004 the company will be moving into new premises so that the design, manufacturing and distribution of its new products can be co-located in a single facility. The address for the new company is Sight Enhancement Systems, Unit 17, 60 Bathurst Drive, Waterloo, Ontario N2V 2A9 tel: 519 883-8400 fax: 519 883-8405. Further information about the company can be found at: **www.sightenhancement.com** where new product information will be announced as it becomes available, or by contacting Dave Bevers, President by e-mail at: **dbevers@sightenhancement.com**.

Commercialization at the NRC

The National Research Council (NRC: **www.nrc-cnrc.ca**) has restructured its corporate operations to establish a separate NRC Commercialization Branch. This unit will integrate the Corporate Services Business Relations Office and TIS Horizontal Commercialization Initiatives with new resources, with a mandate to provide strategic support to an enhanced NRC commercialization effort. This is a first step in the implementation of an initiative intended to strengthen NRC's position with respect to the Government priorities set out in the recent Federal Budget and the 2004 Speech from the Throne.

Susan Moggridge, the NRC Director General of Development has accepted the new position of DG, Commercialization and the challenge of moving NRC forward on this front. Ms. Moggridge has extensive executive-level experience in technology-based industry including positions with firms recognized as Canada's most successful in research commercialization. She will be based in M-58 but working closely with all of the institutes and, particularly, with NRC-IRAP which will be critical to the success of this venture.

The new NRC Commercialization Branch will provide a focus for corporate support to the institutes and IRAP in this respect and will spearhead the NRC's corporate level drive to support the Government's agenda and to lever new resources into collaborative initiatives that capitalize on NRC's strengths. To this end, the new branch will explore strategic options with partners and develop pilot projects to demonstrate NRC's enhanced capabilities for commercialization and position the NRC strategy for future policy consideration.

Government of Canada Invests $4.7 Million in VisuAide Project

On April 7, the Honourable Lucienne Robillard, Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, announced a $4.7-million Government of Canada investment in VisuAide to support the development of assistive technologies for persons with visual disabilities. The Government of Canada investment, being funded through Technology Partnerships Canada ($3.9 million) and Canada Economic Development ($800 000), is part of a $13.1-million project being undertaken by VisuAide.

There are currently 610,950 Canadians identified as visually impaired. As the population ages this number increases, with one in nine persons over the age of 65 entering this category. The purpose of this project is to develop, adapt and interface conventional new technologies with existing visually impaired technology tools. Technology is continually creating new opportunities to assist people with disabilities to participate more fully in their environment. Extending Canada's e-inclusive information society ensures that people from all demographics are given equal access.

"The goal of the Government of Canada is to ensure that the benefits of technology touch every Canadian," said Minister Robillard. "As a world leader in the knowledge-based economy, we strive toward the creation of an e-inclusive information society."

Accessing information and navigating in the world are the most difficult problems for the visually impaired. Under the proposed research and development project, VisuAide will develop new, affordable technology platforms to assist blind or visually impaired persons access print, electronic or directional resources. These developments will give rise to increased personal independence to venture down unknown streets, to navigate all levels of complexities of print or electronic material, and to enable note taking of data-intensive applications.

"Our company is committed to developing new technologies to enhance daily life and increase independence for the visually impaired," said Gilles Pepin, President of VisuAide. "Through Government of Canada support, we optimize our capability of offering high-quality innovative products."

"Digital technology is opening the doors of equal access for all, and giving the blind and visually impaired the necessary tools to be active contributors in a sighted world," said Jim Sanders, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. "Enhanced access to computers, communications and the environment fosters personal growth and productivity, while making e-inclusion a reality."

Technology Partnerships Canada is a special operating agency of Industry Canada, with a mandate to provide funding support for strategic research and development, and demonstration projects that will produce economic, social and environmental benefits for Canadians.

Since 1996, TPC's activity has been rooted in helping Canadian companies perform research and development projects that take new technologies closer to the marketplace. These projects have the potential to improve the efficiency of production processes in traditional sectors as well as support innovation in emerging technologies, enabling Canadian companies to become world class.

Canadian industries take the lead in bringing innovation forward to the marketplace. TPC acts as a catalyst, investing strategically to accelerate the successful development of key technologies that will benefit Canadians in their everyday lives.

The mandate of Canada Economic Development is to promote the economic development of the regions of Quebec (www.dec-ced.gc.ca). To that end, the agency focuses on two main areas of activity -- enterprise development and improving the environment for economic development of the regions -- thus contributing directly to the attainment of the Government of Canada's economic priorities, particularly with respect to innovation, competitiveness, local development and sustainable development.

News Bits

The Canadian Braille Authority (CBA) voted unanimously to form a Unified English Braille Implementation Committee at its annual board meeting on April 4, 2004. The board stated that "Given that the International Council on English Braille acknowledges the Unified English Braille Code as an international standard for English braille and has referred it for consideration and possible adoption to national standards-setting bodies, the CBA will take a leadership role in the adoption of UEBC as the standard for English braille in Canada by identifying a process for implementation in collaboration with relevant national and provincial organizations, departments of education, and consumers." The names of the members of the CBA Implementation Committee will be posted on the CBA website **www.canadianbrailleauthority.ca** as soon as they have been finalized.

Automobility Manufacturing Corp. of Regina Saskatchewan is celebrating the 15th anniversary of their 901 automotive hand control system for people with disabilities. Automobility hand controls are sold world wide and used by all of the better car rental companies in the world. Automobility has also introduced

their new pedal extenders used to get short statured drivers safely back from the air bag. For more information, e-mail the company at: **sales@handcontrolscorp.com**

Beverley Milligan, President of responseTV Inc., moderated a panel that discussed and debated "Tangible Business Partnerships between Broadcasters and the Telecommunication and Broadcast Distribution Industries" at the National Association of Broadcasters conference in Las Vegas, April 18. The panel included Wendell Bailey, a widely recognized expert on telecommunications, cable television, and broadband technology and infrastructure; Gary Arlen, Arlen Communications Inc., a research and consulting firm specializing in broadband media, telecommunications and entertainment; C. Lincoln Hoewing, Assistant Vice President, Internet and Technology Issues, for Verizon, the largest telecommunications provider in the USA; and Glenn Reitmeier, Vice President of Technology at NBC and involved in the creation and launch of NBC's new high-definition cable channel, Bravo-HD+. Ms Milligan's company, responseTV, is a Market Research specialty television channel that collects data using interactive middleware as its primary data collection tool. Licensed by the CRTC, responseTV is one example of how partnerships can address the changing business environment for the media industry.

Liberty Motor Company is the first mobility equipment manufacturer in Canada to achieve "Authorized Converter Pool Account" status with Ford Motor Company of Canada Ltd. Ford Motor Company recognizes the growing need for accessible transportation, and is taking initiatives to ensure that those needs are met through attention to safety, price and reliability. By enhancing its relationship with Liberty, Ford is taking a leading role in bringing mobility solutions to Canadians with disabilities. Liberty Motor Company is Canada's leading manufacturer of wheelchair accessible minivans. Based just minutes from Ford's Windstar/Freestar assembly plant in Oakville, Ontario the Liberty modified wheelchair accessible Ford Windstar and Freestar are truly Canadian solutions for the transportation needs of Canadians with disabilities.

The Canadian Standards Association has sent out its draft standard B651.2, Barrier-Free Design for Self-Service Interactive Devices for public comment. The public review phase ends in July. To obtain a copy of the draft, contact Ian Brodie by phone at 416-747-2670 or by e-mail at: **ian.brodie@csa.ca**.

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind Library has been named the 2004 recipient of the American Library Association's (ALA) Francis Joseph Campbell Award. The citation and medal is presented to a library or person who has made an outstanding contribution to the advancement of library service for the blind and people with physical disabilities. In the announcement of the award, which will be presented on June 27 at the ALA Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida, award committee Chair Ruth Nussbaum said that the CNIB Library "has set a new international standard for excellence in advancing library services and resources to their clients who are blind, visually impaired, and print-disabled".

Progress is being made toward the creation of a Canada-Europe S&T Cooperation Office in Ottawa. The proposed Office will work to raise awareness and facilitate opportunities for increased transatlantic R&D collaboration and to strengthen the Canadian connection to the European Research Area. A Canadian stakeholder consortium consisting of various granting councils and other national science organizations has pledged funding for the office and a proposal will be submitted to obtain Framework 6 (FP6) funding from the European Union to support office activities. This competitive call is only open to non-EU countries with S&T Cooperation Agreements with the European Union. Project funding, which could be as much as 300,000 Euros over three years, could be in place at the end of 2004 and the office could be up and running in 2005. For more information, contact: **paola.de-rose@dfait-maeci.gc.ca**.

This year's Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association Foundation was made accessible through the use of the Communication Access Realtime Translation system that was developed by Accurate Realtime Reporting Inc. Charles Laszlo reported that the seven people who attended in person and the 15 who participated over the Web were successful in concluding their business. "This is definitely not a one-way system showing the captioning," Charles told us, "but it also allows for Web-participants to make comments. We were told that the system is being expanded and will soon be able to accommodate additional types of communications methods." Further information and details on CART can be found at: **www.VisualVoiceCaptions.com**.

The Disability and Information Technologies Research Alliance (Dis-IT: **www.dis-it.ca**) is a group of 15 researchers and 17 partner organizations examining how information and communications technologies can increase the quality of life and the inclusion of Canadians with disabilities. The research is

focusing on accessibility and technology in four environments: workplaces, e-learning in colleges and universities, on-line consultations, and retail and public services (e.g. automated banking machines). Deborah Stienstra, Director of the University of Manitoba's new Interdisciplinary Master's Program in Disability Studies, is the Principal Investigator. The other researchers come from many disciplines, including community rehabilitation, psychology, engineering, rehabilitation medicine, and adaptive technology. Partner organizations include consumer-based disability advocacy organizations, businesses, developers of mainstream and assistive technologies, universities, colleges, governments, and research institutes. This three-year project continues until September 2006, and is funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) through its Initiative on the New Economy program. For further information, contact: Gary Annable, Community Co-Director, Disability and Information Technologies Research Alliance (Dis-IT), Council of Canadians with Disabilities, 926 - 294 Portage Avenue Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0B9 e-mail: **ine@ccdonline.ca** tel: 204-947-0303 ext. 230 TTY: 204-943-4757 fax: 204-942-4625.

Janet Hopkins, a Kamloops, BC-based writer, educator and assistive technology practitioner, has written a book called "Assistive Technology: An Introductory Guide for K-12 Library Media Specialists". The book, published by US firm, Linworth Publishing (**www.linworth.com**), offers valuable information on accessibility and assistive technologies for educators including K-12, public and postsecondary librarians. It covers such topics as Inclusion and accessibility; school reform, legislation and funding; operating system and browser accessibility; add-on assistive technology hardware and software for special needs; open source and proprietary software; captioning technologies; portable and assistive devices; Internet resources, conferences, and professional development. Expert contributors from the United States and Australia are featured in sidebar and chapter content throughout the book. The book (ISBN number: 1-58683-138-0) is available from the publisher or through online booksellers such as Amazon. Janet Hopkins can be reached at: Assistive Tech Educational Consulting, 2265 MacIntyre Pl., Kamloops, BC V1S 1H7 tel: 250-828-1444 fax: 250-828-1452 e-mail: **AT_Consulting@Canada.com**. Web: **http://ca.geocities.com/janethopkinsbc/at_consulting@canada.com**

Canada's only national audio information service, VoicePrint Canada , received three first place and two honourable mentions at the International Association of Audio Information Services' (IAAIS) Awards Banquet in May. VoicePrint Canada won awards in three program categories: Interview and/or Call in Show, Narrative Reading and News Digest. Marjorie Nicolaou, the News Digest volunteer reader, said, "It's such a pleasure to read at VoicePrint Canada. Receiving an award like this reinforces what I know we do so well." Canada also received an honourable mention in the On Location and Public Awareness categories. VoicePrint Canada can be accessed on the S.A.P. of CBC Newsworld; Star Choice, ExpressVu, Look TV and Skycable audio channels and on the Web at **www.voiceprintcanada.com**.

The next issue of the Bone and Joint Decade (BJD) newsletter will deal with Trauma. It is to be released around the beginning of June and will be posted to **www.bjdcanada.org**. Submissions are also being requested for the Paediatrics issue. The deadline for submissions (maximum: 650 words and bilingual submissions would be appreciated) is June 1. To request hard copies of the BJD newsletter or to submit an article, e-mail Hazel Wood, Project Coordinator, Eastern Canada, Bone and Joint Decade at: **hwood@rehabresults.com**.

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **strategis.ic.gc.ca/adio** . At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Mary Frances Laughton or Deb Finn
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4316 or 613-990-4297 fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
Internet: **adio@crc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Industry Canada Industrie Canada

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

Fall 2004

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 21

JAN 2 9 2005

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

BCIT to Open Medical and Assistive Devices Commercialization Office

Western Economic Diversification Canada will provide $340,000 in federal funding to the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT: **www.bcit.ca**) for the development of a Medical and Assistive Devices Commercialization Office. The funding was announced in June.

The new office will expand the services of BCIT's Health Technology Research Group (HTRG) and enhance ongoing research and development activities. It will allow health technologies to be marketed across Western Canada by providing detailed business planning to innovators and developers.

For more than 12 years, the HTRG has engaged in the development and evaluation of medical and assistive devices. Core competencies are in prototype development including engineering, industrial design, electronic, plastics and in product evaluation which includes gerontology, biomechanics, human factors and epidemiology. With a core research staff of eight full-tine and seven part-time employees, the HTRG also draws upon BCIT's teaching faculty and staff for expertise as needed. The group works with unique, world-class facilities and equipment, including the Dr. Tong Louie Living Laboratory for state-of-the-art product evaluation and focus groups, and the Centre for Rehabilitation Engineering and Technology that Enables (CREATE) for prototype development.

The new commercialization office will work with BCIT's past and existing clients, who are drawn from private sector device development companies, academic institutions, industry associations and government organizations, to assist them with the development of commercialization plans including independent market research, business plan development and access to investment. For more information about the office, contact Nancy Paris-Seeley, Director, Health Technology Research Group, BCIT Technology Centre at 604-432-8754.

NBRS Honoured with Award

The CNIB Library for the Blind awarded this year's Dr. Dayton M. Forman Memorial Award to The National Broadcast Reading Service Inc. (NBRS) in recognition of the NBRS' efforts to enhance media access to blind, visually impaired or otherwise print-disabled Canadians.

"It was an honour to receive such an award for the on-going service that we provide," said Paul Thiele, past-chair of the NBRS board. "Access to news and information is our mandate and we plan to continue making print media accessible for millions of print-restricted Canadians."

NBRS received the award at a breakfast reception on June 19 hosted by The CNIB Library during the Canadian Library Association conference. The award is especially poignant this year as Dr. Forman was instrumental in helping establish NBRS and later served as its president from 1991-1993.

Less than 5% of information in Canada ever makes it into a format such as braille or audio, and more than 3 million blind or visually impaired Canadians depend on what little there is. Since 1989, NBRS has worked persistently to address this issue.

"The services that NBRS provides to Canadians who are blind and visually impaired are invaluable," said Margaret McGrory, executive director of the CNIB Library. "It is a privilege to work alongside NBRS to help bridge the gap in access to information."

NBRS is a not-for-profit enterprise, which through its VoicePrint Canada and AudioVision Canada (AVC) operations divisions produces and distributes services that can help reduce barriers to visual media. VoicePrint Canada partners with hundreds of volunteers to produce audio versions of news information published by more than 100 daily and community newspapers and magazines. Its broadcast reaches more than 8 million Canadian homes through licensed program distributions such as cable companies, direct-to-home satellite audio channels, and at **www.voiceprintcanada.com**. AVC is the preeminent audio description production centre in Canada, making films and television programs more accessible for those who cannot see the screen or cannot see it well through the addition of audio inserts that describe key elements essential to the story line. Many Canadian libraries, including The CNIB Library for the Blind, loan AVC described videos to their patrons.

Whitehorse City Council Leads the Way in Municipal Captioning

On June 21, the City of Whitehorse launched a new service to provide live, closed-captioned broadcasts of City Council meetings. All Council meetings were to be aired on in-Chambers TV monitors and on WHTV Cable Channel 9 with closed captioning for the benefit of Whitehorse residents, particularly those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

To the City of Whitehorse's knowledge, this is a first for a Canadian municipality to offer this service.

"We are very pleased to offer this new service," said Mayor Ernie Bourassa. "Whitehorse is proud to be a leader in providing access to municipal services to all citizens, regardless of their ability. This new service will benefit all Whitehorse residents and is just one of many progressive and inclusive initiatives undertaken by Council."

Accurate Real-Time Reporting of Vancouver is the captioning provider. Although the company had demonstrated successful and affordable delivery of similar services to the city of Prince George, British Columbia, this is the first time they have employed their technology for the purpose of council meeting telecasts. The closed-captioning system combines digital technology and human expertise. An audio signal is sent to the offices of Accurate Real-Time Reporting in Vancouver, where it is received by an individual trained in court reporting. The reporter transcribes the proceedings using court reporting equipment and, through the Internet, sends a live, verbatim, digital account of the proceedings back to Whitehorse, where it is decoded and tagged onto the video and audio signals currently being sent to WHTV.

The impetus for providing captioned meetings grew out of a request made in 2003 from the Yukon Association for the Deaf to the Mayor and Council to offer sign language interpretation of Council meetings. Council also agreed to investigate the feasibility of providing broadcast sign language services and to bring forward a recommendation in this regard to the 2004 Budget Committee. That investigation included consultations with the Yukon Council on Disability, which recommended the services of Accurate Real-Time Reporting to provide captioning, which will make the proceeding accessible to a wider audience, many of whom do not sign.

Bravo for Maestro!

A mainstream handheld PC that is accessible to blind and visually impaired users was launched by VisuAide and HP on June 30 at the National Federation of the Blind's annual convention in Atlanta, Georgia.

Built on the HP iPAQ Pocket PC h4150 platform, Maestro is accessible through the use of text-to-speech technology and a tactile keyboard membrane over the PDA touch screen. Users can enjoy the ultra-compact size of a real PDA and essential information-access functionality: text and vocal note taking, agenda, contact directory, etc. The visually impaired can benefit from the same applications than sighted users without handling a stylus.

Scheduled to begin shipping in September, Maestro takes advantage of wireless communication networks such as Bluetooth to yield a modular system that can be operated with or without an external keyboard (Braille or standard), depending on user preference and the task at hand. For example, Maestro allows Braille input using either the tactile keyboard on the unit for brief notes, or an external Braille keyboard for extensive note taking.

With its open environment, the system readily integrates third-party or other VisuAide applications, such as Trekker, a GPS orientation system, and Victor Reader, a digital talking-book player. As a mass-market product, Maestro can evolve in price, power and connectivity at the same rate as electronics for the sighted. Users can benefit from the latest innovations in the PDA market much earlier and at a lower price.

Through its Accessibility Program Office, HP builds relationships with assistive technology companies such as VisuAide to meet its goal of designing, producing and marketing products and services that can be used by everyone, including people with disabilities.

Using their free membership in the HP Developer and Solution Partner Program (**www.hp.com/dspp**), assistive technology companies can use HP technologies, platforms and operating systems to create innovative solutions. The program also offers technical, sales and marketing support. "At HP, we believe that accessibility is the result of combined efforts," said Michael Takemura, director, Accessibility Program Office, Personal Systems Group, HP.

VisuAide is one of the many leading assistive technology companies that use the HP iPAQ Pocket PC as a platform to create products for people with disabilities. VisuAide chose the iPAQ as their platform for its accessibility, efficient keyboard layout and central navigation key. The iPAQ allows for greater connectivity than the average Pocket PC via USB or serial port, and it uses a flexible, standard platform, Microsoft Windows(R) CE.

"VisuAide's objective was to provide users with a low-cost, highly portable mobile-computing solution," said Gilles Pepin, president of VisuAide. "VisuAide hopes to make technological aids available to a larger number of blind and visually impaired individuals." To find out more about VisuAide's products, including Maestro, visit their web site at: **www.visuaide.com**.

Quebec Company Looks at ICT Accessibility for People with Disabilities

A Quebec company, Sol-Vi inc., has begun a project in the Sainte-Thérèse-de-Blainville region of the province to research the role that information and communications technologies (ICT) can play in enabling people with physical or sensory disabilities to enter and remain in the workforce.

The project is funded through Social Development Canada's Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities. Part of the research will include an examination of activities going on in other parts of the world, such as the integrated approaches that are being used in Europe to involve hospitals, the assistive technology industry, university informatics and engineering faculties and organizations of and for people with disabilities in the development of tools and methodologies for improving the accessibility of mainstream ICT. Sol-Vi is in the process of bringing together similar groups of stakeholders both in the Thérèse-de-Blainville region and elsewhere in Quebec and the rest of Canada to participate in the project.
The eventual aim of the project is to foster growth of the assistive technology industry in the region, as well as the development of knowledge and awareness of the ability of people with disabilities to find and hold permanent jobs. The project is also intended to foster a closer working relationship between local AT companies and the various university and hospital research facilities in the region. To this end, leaders in each of these sectors will be identified and their participation will be sought for a public-private industry pilot project that will provide workers with disabilities with the AT they need to become and/or remain employable.

For more information on the project, contact the project coordinator, Daniel Deneault, at Sol-Vi inc. via e-mail at **daniel@sol-vi.com** or by phone at 450-433-7032. You can also visit Sol-Vi's web site at: **www.sol-vi.com**.

News Bits

Queen's University conferred an honourary doctorate on Dr. Morris (Mickey) Milner during its convocation ceremonies on May 28. An expert in assistive technologies, Mickey recently retired as Chairman, Rehabilitation Medicine at the Bloorview MacMillan Children's Centre and is a professor emeritus at the University of Toronto. His distinguished career has been spent in the development and improvement of assistive technologies for people with mobility disabilities as well as in active participation in a number of activities aimed at improving accessibility for people will all kinds of disabilities. This includes chairmanship of the Canadian Standards Association's Strategic Steering Committee on Public Safety and Well-being (the committee responsible for overseeing such CSA standards as the Accessible Design for the Built Environment, Barrier-Free Design for Automated Banking Machines and the Design for Aging guideline) and membership on the Minister of Industry's Advisory Committee on Assistive Devices and Persons with Disabilities. Also awarded an honourary doctorate at Queen's convocation this year was former Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien.

On June 23, the Network of Canada Business Service Centres was awarded the 2004 United Nations Public Service Award in the category of "Improvement of Public Service Results". Criteria for this award are increasing responsiveness to the needs of citizens, promoting equity and delivering public services in a manner emphasizing timeliness, courtesy and access.

In July, Betty Dion of Ottawa was elected the new Chair of the International Commission on Technology and Accessibility-Global (ICTA-Global). She succeeds Michael Fox, who was elected President of Rehabilitation International. To learn more about ICTA-Global, visit their web site at **www.ictaglobal.org**.

In September, VoicePrint Canada launched the first of 100 Local Broadcast Centres (LBCs). These centres are intended to provide VoicePrint listeners with local news in an audio format at **www.voiceprintcanada.com**. All LBC web sites will have five main news and information categories: News, Births/Deaths,

Grocery Specials, Community Events and Sports. The first LBC office to open was in Toronto, with a second office opening in Edmonton at the beginning of October. More LBC sites will open within the next few months with a total of 100 sites by the year 2010.

Drummondville, Quebec-based firm Industries Jaro is now a new dealer for Ultratec's TTY working with payphones. Jaro is also working on the development of new brackets to install these TTYs in different models of phonebooths. For more information on Jaro, its products and activities, visit their web site at **www.industriesjaro.com**, call them at 1-877-477-5151 or 819-477-5151, fax them at 819-477-5011 or email them at **mail@industriesjaro.com**.

Soaring Eagle Communications has added IWAT: Individualized Web Accessibility Training to its suite of online courses. Delivered via e-mail, IWAT includes a three-lesson mini-course called "Web Accessibility: What is This all About?" and a seven-lesson course based on the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0, called "Web Accessibility Simplified". The first of these courses is designed for managers, decision-makers and those with a general interest; the other is aimed at those responsible for web site design or maintenance. For more information or to register for these courses, Contact Glenda Watson Hyatt via e-mail at **Glenda@eaglecom.bc.ca**.

The Government of Ontario's Paths to equal Opportunity Office has produced a French language terminology guide to assist people in using the appropriate terms to use with regard to disability and people with disabilities. The guide, called "Guide Terminologique : Un vocabulaire approprié à l'égard des personnes handicapées de l'Ontario" is available in multiple format on demand, as well as in .pdf, html and text versions on the Office web site at: **www.equalopportunity.on.ca/fre_g/**.

A new, easy-to-read font has been designed especially for people with low vision by the American Printing House for the Blind. Called APHont (pronounced Ay-font), it features heavy, open characters, large punctuation marks, wide letters, no serifs and high crossbars. APHont is available as a free download from **www.aph.org/products/aphont.html** (you must certify its use by or for persons with vision disabilities).

Microsoft Canada and the CNIB have been honoured with Imagine's "New Spirit of Community Partnerships" Award in recognition of their partnership in developing The CNIB Digital Library. This award recognizes their commitment to improving access to information for more than three million print-disabled Canadians. The award winners were announced September 20 by Chris Pinney, Director of Imagine at the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy's Annual Symposium in Toronto. This is the second consecutive year Microsoft has won this celebrated award presented by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy to Canadian companies and charities that form an innovative partnership to address a social need. Microsoft Canada and the CNIB began creating The CNIB Digital Library in 2002 to give thousands of visually impaired Canadians access to tens of thousands of new books, over 40 newspapers and hundreds of magazines. The library also contains The Children's Discovery Portal - the first portal in the world designed specifically for children who are blind and visually impaired. Imagine's New Spirit of Community Partnership Awards were founded in 1996 to recognize and celebrate innovative and effective partnerships and programs created by companies, nonprofits and charitable organizations that are making a difference.

For his dedication to helping blind and visually impaired Canadians live independently, Earl Bryenton has been awared the CNIB's 2004 Winston Gordon Award. This $15,000 annual prize recognizes advances in technology that benefits people with vision loss. Mr. Bryenton's company, BRYTECH (**www.brytech.com**) develops innovative electronic products for blind and visually impaired consumers, including an ultrasonic mobility device, a colorimeter and talking currency identifers for a number of countries. The award presentation was made on October 13 at the Bank of Canada, as part of the Bank's ceremonies to unveil the new $50 bill. "Being able to handle personal financial transactions with confidence is a fundamental part of living independently," said CNIB president and CEO Jim Sanders. "Earl's contribution to helping blind and visually impaired Canadians is immeasurable."

The 12th World Congress of International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO) will be held in Vancouver, B.C., Canada on from July 29 - August 3, 2007. The ISPO World Congress is the premiere global event for multidisciplinary prosthetic and orthotic care. The ISPO Canada National Society is pleased to welcome you to Vancouver to enjoy the scientific sessions, workshops and symposia, expansive trade exhibits, and active social programs. The ISPO World Congress will enable leading researchers and practitioners from

a broad range of disciplines to improve the quality of life for individuals requiring an orthosis or prosthesis. Congress information can be found at **www.ispo.ca/congress** or by phone at 604-681-5226.

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at:
strategis.ic.gc.ca/adio . At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Mary Frances Laughton or Deb Finn
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4316 or 613-990-4297 fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
Internet: **adio@crc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Publications

Industry Canada Industrie Canada

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

Winter 2005

CA1
IST
-A17

ACCESSIBLE NEWS Nº 22

Visit us at CSUN

ADIO will be back again this year at the annual Technology & Disability Conference, which is presented by California State University, Northridge (CSUN) in Los Angeles. If you are attending CSUN (March), drop by and say hello. You'll find us in Booth Number 336 in the Marriott Hotel's main exhibit hall. Just look for the booth with the big Canadian flag.

This year, our booth will again have product literature on display from various Canadian AT companies and organizations, along with a peek at some of the new and exciting changes we are making to the Accessible Procurement Toolkit.

Pulse Data International and VisuAide Merge

The Directors of New Zealand-based Pulse Data International and Canadian-based VisuAide announced the merger of their companies on January 20, and the creation of a new organization to serve the needs of people with visual impairment. The merged entity will be known as the HumanWare Group.

The HumanWare name has been widely used in North America since it was adopted as the name for Pulse Data's North American subsidiary in 1989. The new company combines two of the industry's most innovative companies, both recognised as world leaders in their respective fields. Products like the SmartView video magnifier and more recently myReader (the world's first low vision auto-reader) are redefining the way people look at low vision while the Victor Reader family of digital talking book players has been at the forefront of the industry since its inception. The BrailleNote is the best-known solution in the notetaker market today, and this market will be expanded with the introduction of Maestro. Finally, the companies produce the world's only commercialised GPS based orientation solutions for the blind - Trekker and BrailleNote GPS.

LIBRARY
JUN 2 2005

Canada

Pulse Data International's CEO, Dr Russell Smith, will head the new organization. "We strongly believe that unifying the two organisations will accelerate the achievement of the companies' common vision and goals," Dr Smith said. "VisuAide shares our dream of developing, manufacturing and marketing world leading products that enable people with sight related disabilities to attain their greatest potential."

Following the merger, Gilles Pepin will become President and CEO of HumanWare's Canadian subsidiary. Both Mr. Pepin and Yves Boisjoli, VisuAide's CFO, will become significant shareholders of the HumanWare Group. Mr. Pepin will also join the HumanWare Group's Board of Directors.

For many years, Pulse Data and VisuAide have shared a similar research and development philosophy and have invested heavily in ongoing product development. HumanWare is committed to retaining this focus on innovation and will maintain the existing R&D operations in both New Zealand and Canada. The combination of these units will create the largest R&D capability in the industry.

With a team of over 200 employees worldwide, HumanWare is one of the largest companies in the low vision and blindness industry. Sales offices are located in the United States, Canada, the UK, Australia and New Zealand, while the parent company will be based in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Global Television Commits to 100% Closed Captioning of its Programming

The Global Television Network Inc. announced a new policy on November 16 that will increase closed captioning levels for the deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing communities of Canada to all its programming, 24 hour a day and seven days a week. The policy will also apply to all Global owned television stations.

The new policy, which exceeds the captioning levels required by the CRTC, took effect on January 1, 2005. It is the result of collaborative work between Global Television, Mr. Henry Vlug, a lawyer and an advocate for deaf people who is himself Deaf and the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC).

This settlement was reached through the use of mediation, a voluntary approach that allows parties to get a better understanding of each other's positions and to address the needs and interests that are key to finding a solution. Mediation is being increasingly used by the CHRC to help parties craft creative solutions and reach a speedy resolution to their dispute.

"Global is very proud of its new policy" said Doug Bonar, Senior Vice President, Technology and Broadcast Operations. "It will ensure that members of the deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing communities have access to and can enjoy the programming of Global Television as fully as any other member of our society" he added.

"Canadians who are deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing have as much right to access television programming as their fellow Canadians" said Henry Vlug. "Today's settlement is another important milestone for all of us" he added.

Mr. Vlug was also pleased that Global Television will take additional steps to inform its advertising clients of the importance of captioning their commercials to reach this valued segment of the viewing audience.

Mary Gusella, Chief Commissioner for the Canadian Human Rights Commission indicated that the Commission was very pleased with this positive outcome and congratulated the parties who dedicated their time and efforts to make things happen.

International Round-Up
- by Mary Frances Laughton

On the invitation of DG-INFOSOC (Director General, Information Society), I flew to Brussels on October 14 to attend the "International Workshop on Accessibility Requirements for Public Procurement in the ICT Domain" which was held October 19-21. The Workshop was co-sponsored by the European Commission, the US Access Board, the European ICT Standards Board and the European Disability Forum with the support of the eInclusion@EU project.

Copies of the agenda and presentations are at:

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/policy/accessibility/regulation/pubproc_ws_2004/index_en.ht
The goal for the workshop was to identify how standardisation and legislation

can be used to harmonize ICT public procurement to support accessibility to the information society by people with disabilities and older persons. I was the only Canadian present. My presentation, "Towards Accessible ICT Procurement in Canada", was given on the third day and it generated considerable discussion.

After the conference and some one-on-one meetings, I then flew to London where I met with the Accessibility and Usability Working Group of the British Web Designers Association. They are setting up a certification scheme for web companies and are looking for Canadian participation. I will follow up with them on my return to Canada. It is not clear if there is a good match for the Canadian way of working.

From November 7-10, 2004, at the invitation of Microsoft and with the support of the DAISY Consortium and the IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations) Section for the Blind, I was privileged to be one of just under 80 leaders of the world's libraries for the blind and related policy organisations who came together in Redmond, Washington at the Microsoft Headquarters to develop the roadmap to a Global Digital Library for the Print-Disabled. There were over 25 countries and 30 organizations represented as the vision of the Global Library was fleshed out.

Day one included a session with Bill Gates outlining his vision followed by several Microsoft engineers describing their related research. We were challenged by all levels of Microsoft to develop a clearly defined, prioritized list of issues/features that we would like to see addressed in Longhorn (the next MS OS) which was to be feature locked in about two months.

By the end of day one, the group had agreed upon five over-arching principles for the development of the Roadmap. They are: Cooperation; Act Now; Focus on the DAISY standard; Set up clearly defined projects with stated objectives and keep the end-user at the centre of the planning. Day two and three moved to the establishment of a number of sub-principles and projects.

Margaret McRory of the CNIB was on the planning group and as can be expected, CNIB will be involved in much of the implementation. John Kelly, the new Director of RFB&D (Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic) was in attendance and was very supportive of the sharing regime.

The Council on Access to Information for Print-disabled Canadians will keep a

watching brief on this activity and participate where appropriate. A number of its working groups are active in elements that will support this vision.

The last event of the session was a tour of new Main Branch of the Seattle Public Library, a modern bright institution.

In December, I was privileged to be invited to attend the 10th anniversary celebrations of the World Wide Web Consortium held in Boston on December 1. The presentations given are found on the web at:
www.W3.org/2004/09/w3c10.html

During the event, the Government of Canada was thanked for its continued involvement in the Web Accessibility Initiative by both Sir Tim Berners-Lee, the Founder and Director of the W3C as well as Steve Bratt, the COO.

Compusult Expands its Line of AT Products -- Again and Again!

Compusult Limited (**www.compusult.nf.ca**), the Mount Pearl, Newfoundland company that expanded its geomatics business in the mid-1990s to include Assistive Technology (AT -- they developed the ScanTELL talking barcode reader to identify items such as grocery products for blind users), continues to add to its AT product line and to improve its existing AT products.

In September, the company took over manufacturing and distribution of the Scotty LapTop Tray Systems from British Columbia's Product Design Group (PDG). Scotty LapTop Tray Systems (**www.scottylaptop.com/cslt_prod_at_scotty.html**) are a versatile collection of attachment hardware, connectors, supporting links and work surfaces for many uses.

In October and November 2004, Compusult installed workplace adaptations at the Columbia and Kansas City, Missouri VA Medical Centers, based on Compusult's Responder, Vindicator, DigiCite and TeleTalk products. These systems allow blind and visually impaired switchboard operators to independently carry out all work tasks, especially critical alarm system monitoring. Compusult has completed similar installations at several Federal facilities across the United States.

January saw the formal launch of the latest version of the Jouse2 (**www.Jouse.com**) at the Assistive Technology Industry Association conference in Florida. The Jouse2 is an alternative mouse and text input device for computer users with disabilities. The new version of Jouse2 provides several new features, including support for one or two external switches; two types of mouthpieces for sip and puff control; new mounting options for ancillary equipment such as microphones, switches and Webcams; support for four user-selectable versions of Morse Code text input via the sip-and-puff controller; JoyWrite, Compusult's new text input technology that uses the joystick and simple sip-puff combinations to generate characters more quickly than with Morse code; dual-tone audio feedback for sips and puffs when using JoyWrite or Morse Code; built-in dwell cursor capability; and several new user-selectable options. All these features are provided directly through the Jouse2 electronics, so no software is required. The Jouse2 is USB plug-and-play for Microsoft Windows, Macintosh, Linux and UNIX based computer systems, as well as augmentative communication devices with a USB port.

The company also now manufactures two USB-based multi-switch controllers, the U-Switch, a USB-based switch controller for mouse actions that supports up to 6 standard switches and/or one multi-switch and provides Morse Code input capabilities; and the 2-Switch, a miniature USB-based switch controller for two selected mouse actions or two selected keyboard inputs that supports up to two standard switches.

For AAC users, Compusult offers the Outspoken Communicator series of Tablet PC based augmentative communications systems. Both ruggedized and non-ruggedized versions are available with various options, including Compusult's Scotty LapTop Tray wheelchair and/or desktop mounting systems; wheelchair power adapters; portable speaker systems; Compusult's Jouse2; and Compusult's 2-Switch for one or two switch based scanning.

Last but not least, the company is now shipping the Outporter, a portable dedicated notetaker for blind users. The base system includes screenreader software, keypad, screenreader-friendly applications, high quality keyboard, and easy access to all ports and controls.

Coming this April, Compusult will begin shipping FasseTrack POS, the first fully accessible Point-Of-Sale (POS) system for blind merchants. It's speech-enabled and screenreader-friendly.

News Bits

Tash Inc. (**www.tashinc.com**) announced in April 2004 their partnership with Michigan State University to manufacture the digital version of the SCATIR switch. The SCATIR switch is a Self-Calibrating Proximity Switch that allows individuals with limited fine motor abilities to access a single switch for communication or independence within their environment. In May, the company announced the launch of a new interactive training CD that helps take the guesswork out of choosing a switch. Available free to practitioners and users, A Step-by-Step Guide to Assistive Technology, Switch Edition, is the first of its kind in the industry. The CD was developed in response to a growing number of inquiries from clients and clinicians about how to select the correct switch for users with physical disabilities and limitations, from neck and spinal cord injuries to ALS and Muscular Dystrophy. With over 25 different switches to choose from, Tash now offers one of the widest range of options on the continent. "We encourage Occupational Therapists, Assistive Technology Practitioners, Teachers, Speech Language Pathologists, Rehabilitation Engineers and, of course, end-users and their parents to call and request a copy of this complimentary CD," said Tash's President, Colin Wheeler. "We've developed it as a tool to ensure that users get the right switch or switches to achieve their goals, whether for work, leisure or day-to-day living." To find out more about Tash's computer access products, environmental control systems and switches, visit their Web site, e-mail them at **tashinc@aol.com** or call them toll-free at 1-800-463-5685.

In October, Madentec Ltd. (**www.madentec.com**) launched its Tracker(R)Pro miniaturized head-operated mouse at the 22nd annual Closing the Gap conference on Computer Technology in Special Education and Rehabilitation. "Customers were asking for a smaller version with the same great features as our other Tracker products", stated Madentec's President and CEO, Randy Marsden, noting that the new device manages to retain both the mounting and adjustability features of Tracker "in something less than one quarter of the original size."

The Toronto Rehabilitation Institute (**www.torontorehab.com**), a teaching hospital of the University of Toronto, was one of the eight institutions chosen in November to receive funding from the Canadian Foundation for Innovation's new Research Hospital Fund (RHF). The $6,253,296 in RHF funding will be

used to support the costs for laboratories and workspaces for scientists and graduate students engaged in the iDAPT Research Program at the Institute. Led by Dr. Geoff Fernie, Toronto Rehab's vice president of research, in collaboration with investigators at the University of Toronto and other academic centres across Canada, the $36 million iDAPT initiative will significantly change the landscape of rehabilitation research in Canada and beyond. It will be one of the most advanced rehabilitation research facilities in the world where new therapies and assistive technologies will be developed for people recovering from and living with disabling injury or illness.

On November 16, US-based FrogPad Inc. announced the development of the Bluetooth FrogPad, in a strategic partnership with Canadian high tech company Gennum Coporation (**www.gennum.com**). FrogPad is a portable one-handed keyboard with an ergonomic layout designed around the 15 most-used letters of the English alphabet. The Bluetooth version of the FrogPad can be used in a variety of applications where mobility and portability are critical elements, such as mobile phone, PDAs, wearable PCs and GPS devices. Gennum designs, manufactures and markets silicon integrated circuits, modules and systems solutions for a variety of specialized processing applications.

Also in November, Aurora Systems announced the launch of Aurora Suite 2005 for Windows, a software package that helps people with learning disabilities write and spell better. It includes a talking spellchecker that is designed to help even the most creative spellers. It can automatically correct many common spelling mistakes and makes it easy to automatically correct yours. It provides spoken feedback so you can hear when you make mistakes, and it can even read e-mail and web pages to you right off the screen, highlighting each word as it is read. The package is designed to work in the applications that the user currently has installed on his or her computer and a number of speed and ease-of-use improvements to the company's word prediction software and added UNICODE support for better language support. Aurora Talk can import a presentation from a word processor, split it into sentences so the rate of presentation can be controlled and allow the user to a presentation to answer questions. Aurora Suite supports Windows 2000 and XP and comes in three editions: Professional, Standard and Value. For more information contact Aurora Systems, Inc. toll-free at 1-888-290-1133, e-mail them at **service@aurora-systems.com** or check out their website at **www.aurora-systems.com**.

The 2004 IWAY Award in the category of Adaptive Technology went to the Centre de recherche informatique de Montréal (CRIM) for its design of a prototype system that integrates voice recognition with simultaneous closed-captioning in French. Although similar voice recognition/real time transcription systems are available for use in English, CRIM believes this is the first such system intended for Canadian French captioning.

The EnableLinker, a free monthly electronic newsletter packed with disability news and information, published its 30th issue in December. The EnableLinker arrives by e-mail at the beginning of each month and is a quick, effective way to keep up-to-date with issues and events affecting Canada's disability community. Also included in the newsletter are classifieds, jokes, quotations and website links. To sign up at no cost or to view the current issue, visit: **www.enablelink.org/Ezine/Main.html**.

Also in December, Sinclair, Nicholson and Associates (SNA - **www.snaconsulting.ca**) of Ottawa was the successful respondent to a Request for Proposal for work it will be performing on behalf of the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC). The CHRC is reviewing government communication with people who are deaf, deafened, hard of hearing and people who have a speech impediment. The objective of the assignment is to assess whether federal government departments and agencies are able to communicate effectively with people who are deaf, deafened, hard of hearing and people who have a speech impediment. The selection of SNA to participate in this study has been welcomed warmly by the Canadian Association of the Deaf (CAD), the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA) and the Canadian Hearing Society (CHS).

The Report of the Technical Advisory Committee on Tax Measures for Persons with Disabilities, "Disability tax Fairness", was released in December. The Technical Committee was announced in the 2003 Federal Budget to advise the Ministers of Finance and National Revenue on disability-related tax measures and was composed of members of organizations representing persons with disabilities, health practitioners, and human rights and tax experts. Included in its membership was Gary Birch, who is also the Chair of the Minister of Industry's Advisory Committee on Assistive Devices and Persons with Disabilities (ACAD). To obtain copies of the report, which is available on request in accessible formats, contact the Distribution Centre, Department of Finance Canada, Room P-135, West Tower, 300 Laurier Ave. West, Ottawa,

Ontario K1A 0G5, call 613-995-2855. fax 613-996-0518 or visit the Web at: **www.disabilitytax.ca**, where the report is available (in both Official Languages) in PDF, Text format (TXT) or Text only HTML.

VoicePrint Canada announced in January that a national research firm, POLLARA Inc., has been asked to collect the names of persons willing to participate in research projects involving products and services that are designed for persons with disabilities or those people who live with persons with disabilities. There are several studies that will be conducted over the next two years which will require varying levels of participation. Respondents may be asked to complete an on-line survey or respond to questions over the phone. There may even be an option for attendance at a focus group. All participants selected to be in any of these studies will receive compensation, sometimes in cash. If you are interested, please call 1-888-765-5272 and ask for JOHN WONG. If John is not there, you can leave a message and he will call you back. Or you can contact them using the internet at **jwon@pollara.ca**. The purpose of this recruitment is strictly research and there is no intention to sell you anything.

Starling Access Services' (**www.starlingweb.com**) Chuck Letourneau was an invited speaker at the conference of the "Petroleum Convenience Alliance for Technical Standards" in Clearwater, Florida this January. He spoke on the importance of applying national and international accessibility standards including the W3C's Web standards and the various Canadian Standards Association accessibility standards as well as applicable US standards and laws. His message included a plea for harmonization where competing standards exist. Chuck also attended a conference last fall of US state and federal accessibility and procurement professionals in St. Louis Missouri on behalf of the ADIO. The Accessible Procurement Toolkit was demonstrated and garnered favourable comments from attendees. The sharing of experiences and techniques for starting and sustaining accessible procurement programs in different levels of government was invaluable and should find direct applicability in Canada.

Galbraith Communications (GC - **www.galbraithcommunications.com**), a firm specializing in accessible web-based applications, has developed a new web-based video conferencing system that features a range of multiple formats. GC President Cory Galbraith says, "Now, people with low vision or blindness and people who are hard of hearing or deaf can attend presentations and information sessions from the comfort and safety of their home. They can also interact with the presenter and other participants in real time using the format of

their choice, including text, voice and sign language". Mr. Galbraith believes the new "G-Meeting" system has special applications for federal government agencies operating under the Treasury Board Communications Policy. "This tool can help government departments share public information with all members of the public, not just some." The G-Meeting interface includes special translator and interpreter channels so that online sessions can be conducted in both official languages at the same time. For more information on the multiple format G-Meeting system, contact Cory Galbraith in Ottawa at (613) 228-9920. He can also be reached toll-free from anywhere in North America at 1-877-580-9915 and by e-mail at: **cory@galbraithcommunications.com**

PDG Group (**www.prodgroup.com**) has announced that as of February 1, the company will begin independent operations from their Blaine, Washington office. As of that date, all US orders and inquiries should be directed to the company's new Blaine facility at PMB# 173, 1124 Fir Ave., Blaine, WA 98230, USA toll-free phone: 1-888-858-4422, toll-free fax: 1-877-323-9093. PDG Canadian and other international customers will continue to order through PDG's Vancouver, B.C. office.

The Bloorview Research Institute (**www.bloorviewmacmillan.on.ca**) has established an endowment fund to honour Dr. Mickey Milner, one of Canada's foremost researchers on technology for children with physical disabilities. The Mickey Milner International Professorship Endowment Fund will provide the necessary financial resources to support International Visiting Scholars, Professors and Researchers to develop and broaden knowledge sharing information relevant to the field of Developmental Pediatrics. Dr. Milner retired in 2004 as Chairman, Rehabilitation Medicine at the Bloorview MacMillan Children's Centre. He is a professor emeritus at the University of Toronto, chairs the Canadian Standards Association's Strategic Steering Committee on Public Safety and Well-being and is a member of ACAD.

Betty Dion, the Chair of ICTA - Global, the International Commission on Technology and Accessibility, was invited to give a presentation on "International Accessibility Standards" to the United Nations' Fifth Session of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, January 26. Human rights and accessibility was the theme of her presentation, which included an historical overview of the development of international accessibility standards and the movement towards accessibility as a

human rights issue. A global analysis of the similarities and differences in accessibility standards and codes highlighted diverse technical and cultural approaches. The costs of including accessibility into the initial design and construction of buildings and the long term benefits to society provided an economic perspective on accessible design.

The Neil Squire Foundation has changed its name to the Neil Squire Society. Their Web address remains the same, **www.neilsquire.ca**, and they continue to provide innovative programs and services to Canadians with physical disabilities, through their offices in Vancouver, Regina, Ottawa, Fredericton and Moncton.

The organizing is well underway for the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games and accessibility is there as a requirement and a policy. There is a Federal Secretariat and various clusters which are focussing on the myriad of issues around holding a huge event such as the Winter Olympics. Mary Frances Laughton is sitting on the Social Development Cluster which looks at issues around accessibility and volunteerism. She will update us in each Accessible News as the planning proceeds.

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **strategis.ic.gc.ca/adio**. At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Mary Frances Laughton or Deb Finn
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4316 or 613-990-4297 fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
Internet: **adio@crc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Government
Publications

Industry Canada Industrie Canada

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

Spring 2005

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 23

CSUN Wrap-Up

This year's 20th Anniversary Technology & Disability conference (CSUN) drew over 4,100 participants and 175 exhibitors over its four-day run. Once again, there was a very visible contingent of Canadians exhibiting, presenting and attending the show. The Industry Canada booth was staffed by ADIO personnel with assistance from Canadian Heritage colleagues on occasion. We were showing AT-Links (**www.at-links.gc.ca**) and the Accessible Procurement Toolkit (**www.apt.gc.ca**) as well as product literature from over 25 of our industry partners.

Visitors to the Industry Canada booth were steady throughout the conference and interest in Canadian assistive technology, products, systems and services remains high and enthusiastic. We provided a listing of all the Canadian booths on the showfloor, the number of which surprised many visitors.

By having a place for parties to meet, Industry Canada provides a focus for doing business for Canadians. That large Canadian flag and our distinctive red and white draperies in a sea of blue booths make us easy to spot in the exhibit hall and we are always happy to have our industry representatives make use of our location in support of their business networking activities.

CSUN's 20th anniversary keynote speaker was Dr. Al Cook, the Dean of Rehabilitation Medicine at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. Al gave a retrospective of AT over 20 years. Those of us who have been around a while saw lots of familiar technologies.

Our Canadian flag pins continue to be a popular give away. Nearly everyone has a positive story to relate about Canada when they come by the booth.

We heard very positive comments on the papers given by our Canadian colleagues. The conference programme can be found at:
www.csun.edu/conf/2005

JUL

A number of visitors to our booth told us that they were familiar with Accessible News, as it had been passed along to them by colleagues and they asked to be added to our distribution list.

Visuaide disappeared from the showfloor this year and reappeared as HumanWare Canada, part of the newly merged company made up of Visuaide and New Zealand's PDI. The new company launched its look and feel at a lovely reception on March 17. There were several HumanWare product launches.

Madentec staff entertained us all by scooting around the showfloor on a Segway. They announced two new products: TrackerPro, which is a miniaturized head-pointer; and DiscoverUSB.

Compusult was showing its new line of products, including the Scotty LapTop Tray Systems; the Jouse2; two USB-based multi-switch controllers, the U-Switch and the 2-Switch; the Outspoken Communicator series of Tablet PC based augmentative communications systems; and the Outporter portable dedicated notetaker for blind users.

Sight Enhancement Systems was successful in finding distributors for their products including one arrangement that was facilitated by ADIO staff.

Tash once again delighted all comers with their most excellent access technologies.

The worldclass keyboards of Matias were on many people's lips.

DAESSY continued to provide its excellent line of wheelchair accessories.

Afforda-speech was back for its second year with their AAC devices.

Soneil Vision Enabling Solutions, a new exhibitor, showed some of their software and devices for blind people, including their CTravel Agent software, which is designed to enable blind persons to work as travel agents, their Mighty Braille notebook computer and the BDA Braille Data Assistant, which is the first Linux-based pocketsize Braille computer.

Ambutech's line of white canes and related products continued to be well respected.

The braille magic of Quebec's Braille Jymico continued to thrill participants.

The booth location for Quillsoft's WordQ was a frequent request.

Clearly, Canadian companies are developing products and systems that international industrial partners recognize as must-haves to integrate with their own technology!

Europe: Looking for Canadian Partners
- by Mary Frances Laughton

At the invitation of the eInclusion Unit of DG INFSO (part of the European Union Office), I was privileged to participate at the R&D Information Day on April 19 in Brussels. This event allowed me to make some very fruitful contacts. I have sent some detailed messages now to some of our partners.

The following documents have been placed on the Website:
- presentations from the Commission which outline what is happening now and in the future with eInclusion R&D, especially planning for FP7
- presentations from the participants who were looking for partners in their R&D

- a list of participants (names and email addresses) for those who provided their express consent to be included.

The Website is available at:
http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/infso/e-inclusion/library?l=/meeting/info-day_2005-04-19&vm=detailed&sb=Title

I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have about this day or this process. Contact me, Mary Frances Laughton, at tel: 613-990-4316, or by email: **laughton@crc.ca**.

New Features in the Accessible Procurement Toolkit

ADIO continues to add new features to our Accessible Procurement Toolkit to make it even easier to use. The toolkit now includes a Product code lookup form that allows users to search for items by federal GSIN product codes and their American counterparts, the FSC/PSC codes. We are also planning to add the UNSPSC codes as well.

The Accessible Procurement Toolkit has been providing procurement officers and purchasers with product-specific accessibility requirements, standards and best practices that can (or should) be applied when purchasing electronic and information technology, office products and services.

Another use for the toolkit is to show product designers and developers the range of accessibility standards that apply to their products. However, a commonly expressed concern is that either the reason for making such design decisions is unclear, and/or that the technical or functional standards are difficult to envision as actual product features.

To address the concerns of developers and designers the Accessible Procurement Toolkit is bringing together a series of design resources, demonstrations and mock-ups to illustrate aspects of accessible design or products and implementation of services.

As resources are identified, the Toolkit links to them from the appropriate locations:

- A resource that illustrates a particular standard is linked from that standard and will appear in the requirement or prerequisite list of any technology for which that standard applies.

- Some resources apply to specific products or services and those are linked from the Definition of the product.

This Design Resources page will collect links to all the design resources for people who want to browse the range of solutions for many different products or standards.

The first series of illustrations have already been developed for the toolkit. The Neil Squire Society prepared demonstration drawings relating to mobility disabilities. Galbraith Communications developed the demos on blind and low vision issues and they also worked with Deb. Finn on a demo relating to deaf and hard of hearing employees. This work was coordinated by the Human Oriented Technology lab (HOTlab) at Carleton University and the Web design was done by Starling Access Services. As soon as the new contents are available in both official languages, it will be posted to the Web at: **www.apt.gc.ca**.

News Bits

At the beginning of this year, Brookdale Medical Specialties Ltd announced the addition of the Endorphin line of cardio rehab products and the new expanded line of Response fitness and rehab exercise equipment to its catalogue. To find out more, contact Dee Hache at 418 Hanlan Road, Unit 27, Woodbridge, Ontario L4L 3P6, call them at 905-856-5006 or toll-free at 1-800-655-1155, fax them at 905-856-5019 or e-mail them at **brookdalerehabfit@on.aibn.com**.

In March, Aroga Group, Inc. (**www.aroga.com**) was named as the exclusive Master Distributor for Freedom Scientific blindness and low vision products throughout the province of Quebec. The Aroga Group Inc. is Canada's largest and most diverse distributor of assistive technology in Canada with offices in Vancouver, B.C., Edmonton, Alberta, and Montreal, Quebec. Their Montreal office is currently their fastest growing location, and will be expanding even further in the next few months to meet the needs of all customers in Quebec. In addition to supporting the visually impaired and blind communities, Aroga assists individuals with physical disabilities who require computer access, augmentative and alternative communication systems for those who are non-verbal, educational products that enhance learning, and special education products for people with learning disabilities. Freedom Scientific's products include JAWS for Windows, MAGic large print and speech, OpenBook scanning software, PAC Mate portable devices and Focus Braille displays. Aroga will assume distribution responsibilities previously performed by VisuAide and after June 1, Aroga will be solely responsible for all product sales, information, technical support and repair in Quebec.

HumanWare, the new business issued from the recent merger of VisuAide and Pulse Data International, made a number of announcements, during and just after the CSUN conference. The company's new compact DAISY player, Victor Reader Wave and its integrated Trekker GPS orientation product/Maestro accessible PDA were both launched at CSUN. Immediately after the conference, HumanWare announced that it has been contracted by the Federal Technology Service of the (US) General Services Administration on behalf of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped as a member of a consortium led by Battelle and including the National Federation of the Blind and the Trace Center to design and develop their next generation of digital talking book players. The new players will be flash-based and a complete book will fit on a single flash memory card. Last but not least, the company also announced that Version 3.0 of the Victor Reader firmware is now available for the Pro and original Classic model 100/101. To find out more about these products, visit **www.visuaide.com**.

In April, ErgoCanada (**www.ergocanada.com**) added several new products to its line of ergonomic office products. The Saskatoon, Saskatchewan-based company is the exclusive North American distributor of the ErgoClick, a new mouse accessory that enables you to use your left palm to click, double click and right click and your right palm to move the cursor on your current mouse, while keeping both hands completely relaxed. The other recent addition to the company's catalogue is the Savant Elite Foot Switch series of stand-alone programmable foot switches from Kinesis. These switches provide the user with foot-controlled mouse clicks, keyboard action, macro or combination keystrokes. To find out more about these and the rest of ErgoCanada's products, contact them at: P.O. Box 9022, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 7E7, tel: 306-222-3203, fax: 306-382-4995, toll-free: 1-866-335-3746 (ERGO) or email them at **sales@ergocanada.com**.

Catherine Smart has been elected as the new Chair of the Canadian Standards Association's B651 Barrier Free Design Committee. Ms. Smart has extensive experience in establishing and implementing programs designed to assist people with disabilities in participating in the recreational and cultural life of their communities, first with the Ontario March of Dimes, then with Tourism Toronto - Convention and Visitor's Association and most recently in her own consultancy, Smart Move Training and Development Inc. Catherine replaces Betty Dion, who shepherded the B651 standard through two upgrades and a change from its old title, "Barrier Free Design" to "Accessible Design for the

Built Environment". During Ms. Dion's distinguished tenure as Chair of the B651 committee, two sub-committees were established to develop related standards: the B651.1, "Barrier Free Design for Automated Banking Machines" standard, which was released in 2001 and will be updated in 2006; and B651.2, "Accessible Design for Self-Service Interactive Devices", which is currently still in draft form and expected to be released later this year.

On April 6, Jacques Paquin was appointed General Manager of Galbraith Communications (GC - **www.galbraithcommunications.com**). Mr. Paquin, formerly in charge of GC's web conferencing projects, will now oversee all day-to-day operations including project management, human resources and promotions. His primary objective will be to ensure maximum efficiency, productivity and profitability of the company. Prior to coming to Galbraith Communications, Jacques was in charge of attracting major corporations to the Gaspé Region of Quebec. He will take over daily office operations from Cory Galbraith who will now focus on business development and strategic planning on behalf of GC and its major clients.

North Vancouver-based Vision Office (**www.visionoffice.com**) will present the second of three workshops on web accessibility and usability in the Philippines, May 24-26. Entitled "Empowering Persons with Disabilities through ICT", the workshops target webmasters of the Philippines government and NGO websites. They are organized by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons (NCWDP), in cooperation with the Commission on Information and Communication Technology (CICT). Leo Valdes, Managing Director of Vision Office, is the main resource person and presenter of the workshop series. The Commission on ICT aims to make the Philippines the first country where websites in all levels of government are accessible to persons with disabilities. The workshop series will help webmasters understand current legislation and initiatives related to persons with disabilities. In addition to website development, some specific technologies are discussed. For example, the usage of text messaging in the Philippines is reported to be the highest in the world. The third workshop is scheduled to take place in October.

In Ottawa, a group of Human Computer Interaction specialists from academia, industry and government have come together in response to an initiative by the Usability Professionals Association (UPA) to orchestrate a World Usability Day this November 3. The objective of the day is to raise awareness of usability

matters globally. Many countries are taking part in a series of events aiming to do exactly that. The Ottawa group is in the early stages of brainstorming and planning activities for the day as well as for the week leading up to the World Usability Day. Among the possibilities being pursued is a possible trade show with ongoing talks, seminars, tutorials, perhaps a poster or a UI design contest, possibly a student "interactionary" competition, and the like. Although the emphasis is on usability, this event is also seen as an excellent opportunity to demonstrate how accessibility and usability really go so closely hand in hand that it is unsafe to ignore one or the other when planning, designing, developing, or evaluating interactive technology intended for use by people, any people anywhere any time. For more information please contact Gitte Lindgaard (**gitte_lindgaard@carleton.ca**).

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **strategis.ic.gc.ca/adio**. At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Mary Frances Laughton or Deb Finn
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4316 or 613-990-4297 fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
Internet: **adio@crc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Publications

Industry Canada Industrie Canada

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

Summer 2005

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 24

The ADIO Web site has moved

If you have visited the ADIO Web site recently, you have no doubt been informed that we have a new address. Instead of accessing us through Strategis, you will now link to us through our AT-Links site at **www.at-links.gc.ca**. Both the AT-Links and ADIO home pages have seen some changes to make navigation easier as well.

Dis-IT to Offer Workshops on Business Benefits of Accessible ICT Design

The Disability and Information Technologies (Dis-IT) Research Alliance (**www.dis-it.ca**) will present a series of workshops from September to December to show businesses why ensuring their products and services are accessible and usable by as many individual consumers as technically possible and economically feasible is good business practice.

The Dis-IT Research Alliance's Business Benefits of Accessible ICT Design workshops will present information, exercises and examples about the access needs of consumer groups living in emerging markets; the mainstream market forces driving accessibly designed ICT; and how to use Industry Canada's Strategis website (**strategis.ic.gc.ca**) to conduct research to enhance competitive advantages in manufacturing and exporting ICT products and services. There will be separate workshops for ICT Developers and Product Managers, ICT Marketing Managers and ICT Senior Management.

The workshops, which are offered free of charge, will be repeated a number of times, to accommodate participants' busy schedules. They will be delivered on-line, so anyone with a computer, Internet connection and speakers anywhere in the world can participate. A headset microphone is recommended for participating in audio discussions. Detailed information will be provided to registrants.

To register, visit **http://onlineconferencingsystems.com/disit1/workshop1.htm**. Questions about the workshops can be e-mailed to **ine@ccdonline.ca**.

LIBRARY OCT 10 2005

Toronto to Host Festival of Conferences

Two years from now, June 16-19 2007, will be a busy time in Toronto. That's when the Festival of International Conferences on Disability, Aging and Technology (FICDAT) is set to run. FICDAT will include four important conferences running concurrently as well as many joint events. Conference organizers are offering opportunities to sponsor a single conference, multiple conferences or events within the Festival.

The four conferences are:

Growing Older with a Disability, which will explore such questions as how do those who are already disabled cope with increased impairment as they grow older. This conference will explore the spectrum of an aging population with disabilities. Consumers will be invited to speak of their experience and practitioners will be invited to present their data and best practices. The conference will seek new models of service, new policies and solutions from the field. The focus will not be on a population with problems, but on our creative spirit of cooperation, societal support and consumer-directed empowerment.

The **International Conference on Technology and Aging** will explore how the technological revolution can contribute to a positive quality of life as we age. The conference will provide researchers, designers, policy makers and consumers the opportunity to present and learn about new and innovative technologies being developed to help older adults participate fully in their daily lives. Topics of interest will include the design and use of assistive technology, smart homes and intelligent systems, technology for caregiving, impact and outcomes of technology on quality of life, policy and legislative issues, as well as topics related to safety and performance standards for new technologies.

The **Advances in Neurorehabilitation Conference** will explore the physiologic principles that underpin the understanding of the impact of brain injury and neurodegeneration and the technological advances that are leading to a revolution in therapeutic approaches to repair and/or minimize disability and maximize function and well-being. Researchers and clinicians will highlight state-of-the-art rehabilitation techniques and novel therapies focused on optimizing physical and cognitive abilities. The conference will also focus on new technologies to better assess changes in brain function and human behaviour. Many presentations will emphasize the translation of new understanding into clinical practice.

The fourth conference is **Caregivers, Essential Partners in Care**. Growing numbers of people are providing care, without pay, for family or friends who are frail and elderly, chronically or terminally ill, and/or disabled. There are at least 2.9 million family caregivers in Canada. They include women, men, daughters, brothers, in-laws, parents, spouses and neighbours, living in the same house, across town or across the country from those for whom they provide care and support. While caregiving is often personally rewarding, many caregivers experience isolation, fear, job loss, illness and/or anxiety about the future. There are still large gaps in public policy and inadequate supports and services for caregivers. This conference will examine caregiver issues in areas such as respite, access to community care services, supportive employment options and income security, with the focus on research that examines economic and social trends, the role of caregiving in health and social systems and the economy. The conference will compare public policy approaches in countries around the world that are recognizing and supporting family caregivers.

To find out more about FICDAT, visit their Web site at **www.ficdat.ca/**.

The Canada Revenue Agency creates the Disability Advisory Committee

On July 19, Minister of National Revenue John McCallum announced the creation of the Disability Advisory Committee to deal with the administrative aspects of the Disability Tax Credit and with implementing recommendations made by the Technical Advisory Committee on Tax Measures for Persons with Disabilities.

"I am pleased to announce that the CRA has created the Disability Advisory Committee. This committee will provide a forum to identify the needs and expectations of the disability community," stated Minister McCallum. "The Disability Advisory Committee is an important consultative forum through which members can provide helpful advice, comments, and suggestions on tax measures for persons with disabilities. It is crucial that persons with disabilities be treated equally and fairly, and I am confident that the members of the committee will help us achieve this."

The Disability Advisory Committee will report directly to the Minister of National Revenue on all administrative aspects of the tax system related to persons with disabilities. Minister McCallum and the committee held their inaugural meeting in Ottawa on July 18.

The federal government established the Technical Advisory Committee on Tax Measures for Persons with Disabilities in February 2003 to recommend ways of improving the fairness of treatment under the income tax system for persons with disabilities, taking into account available fiscal resources. It specifically recommended that the CRA form a consultative committee composed of consumer and professional representatives.

The 12 committee members, appointed by Minister McCallum, come from different areas of the country and include professionals, such as medical practitioners and tax lawyers, advocates for the disability community, and persons with disabilities. They are, in alphabetical order: George Archibald, Harry Beatty, Dr. Pierre Beauséjour, Dr. Gary Birch (Chair of the Minister of Industry's Advisory Committee on Assistive Devices and Persons with Disabilities), Lembi Buchanan, Dr. Karen Cohen, Hubert Drouin, Deanna Groetzinger, Dr. Ashok Muzumdar, Eileen Reppenhagen, Dr. Raffath Sayeed, and Peter Weissman.

For more information on the Disability Advisory Committee and its members, visit their Web site at: **www.cra.gc.ca/disability**.

TRANSED 2007

The 11th International Conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled Persons (TRANSED) will take place in Montreal, June 18-21, 2007. The theme will be "Benchmarking, Evaluation and Vision for the Future"

Held every three years, the TRANSED conferences are milestone events in the field of accessible transportation, attracting researchers, policy-makers, transport operators, consumers and other specialists worldwide to share innovations and best practices. Delegates from around the world will be meeting in Montreal to exchange strategic and technical experience, including an exhibition showcasing the latest technological developments on accessible transportation and universal design.

This event is hosted by Transport Canada under the auspices of the U.S. Transportation Research Board.

Visit the TRANSED 2007 web site at **www.tc.gc.ca/transed2007**.

For more information contact: TRANSED 2007 Secretariat, Transport Canada, Intergovernmental Affairs and Accessibility, TRANSED, Place de Ville, Tower C , 330 Sparks St, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N5, Email: **transed@tc.gc.ca**, tel.: 1-800-665-6478 (Canada only) or (613) 941-0980 TTY: 1-800-823-3823 (Canada only) or (613) 998-5368 Fax: (613) 991-6422.

News Bits

In June, the Neil Squire Society (**www.neilsquire.ca**) received a $20,000 grant in support of the Employ-Ability program, which provides employment skills development to people with disabilities. The grant, presented as part of The Co-operators Community Economic Development Fund, will be used to expand the program to rural New Brunswick. The Employ-Ability program assists physically disabled adults in New Brunswick who are seeking employable skills, education and confidence, to prepare them for long-term employment. The Co-operators Economic Development Fund is a registered charity that was established in 1995. It supports grassroots, community-based programs that target disadvantaged individuals, helping them to build the necessary skills and confidence to find meaningful work and, in many cases, freedom from social assistance.

In July, ADIO had the great pleasure of meeting with a delegation from the Korea Employment Promotion Agency for the Disabled (KEPAD - **www.kepad.or.kr/english**). This extremely dynamic organization works to create jobs suited to the abilities of Koreans with disabilities, provides supports to employers who wish to hire people with disabilities and provides accommodation help and the assistive technology needed to ensure workplaces are accessible. While in the National Capital Region, the KEPAD delegation toured the Adaptive Computing Centre at Social Development Canada and exchanged information with ADIO and the Public Health Agency of Canada. We were fascinated to learn that KEPAD, which has been in operation since 1990, conducts R&D in such areas as vocational rehabilitation, vocational competency and skills development. KEPAD also opened an Assistive Technology Centre last December which, thanks to financial support from Korea's National Lottery, provides assistive devices and accommodations to employers and their employees with disabilities, free of charge.

Alan Cantor has released a new version of "Keyboard Access Tips." This resource is for people who want to operate Windows more efficiently by using the keyboard more effectively. This is not a list of hotkeys. Instead, learn

techniques that allow you to operate Windows-based software without a mouse, and to discover specific hotkeys as you need them. Most of these techniques are poorly-documented; many are undocumented. Available as a saddle-stitched booklet, in PDF, or as a Word document, you can find out more or order it from: Alan Cantor, Cantor Access Inc., e-mail: **acantor@cantoraccess.com**, Web: **www.cantoraccess.com**

Beginning this fall, visitors to the Canada Science and Technology Museum (**www.sciencetech.technomuses.ca/**) will have a chance to see the world's first electric wheelchair, a piece of Canadian history that has had a significant impact on people with severe mobility disabilities. The Klein Chair was developed 50 years ago by an engineer from the National Research Council, George Klein. Mr. Klein's prototype had features that are still found on power wheelchairs today. The Klein Chair will be on loan from the US' Smithsonian Institution and will be on display in Ottawa after October 2 for an unspecified period.

At the end of March, the National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS - **www.neads.ca**) completed a project called "Inclusion of Students With Disabilities in College and University Sponsored Activities". This one-year initiative was supported by the Government of Canada's, Social Development Partnerships Program (SDPP). The project looked at the accessibility of extra-curricular activities for students with disabilities in Canadian colleges and universities. Focus groups with campus activity programmers and students in different regions of the country, questionnaires and a training session and workshop yielded findings that led to the publication of "Making Extra-Curricular Activities Inclusive - An Accessibility Guide for Campus Programmers". This Guide is now available online on the NEADS Web site in HTML, Word and PDF formats along with a project activity report.

Soaring Eagle Communications is now a reseller of Browsealoud, the subscription-based application developed by TextHelp Systems that reads website content aloud for visitors. For further information, contact Glenda Watson Hyatt, Principal, Soaring Eagle Communications, e-mail: **Glenda@webaccessibility.biz**, Web: **www.webaccessibility.biz** .

Anne MacRae has left her position as Senior Advisor in Social Development Canada's Office of Disability Issues to take over as Executive Director of the Nova Scotia Disabled Persons Commission (**www.gov.ns.ca/disa/**). Her new job starts in September.

The makers of the Martin 16 sailboat for people with disabilities is now marketing hardware and microprocessor firmware that will allow remote control of their sailboats. The remote control was tested earlier this summer by Hans Van Leening, Executive Director of the Disabled Sailing Association of BC - Kelowna Branch, when he participated in the Kelowna Yacht Club's annual 50km overnight sailing race. Mr. Van Leening, who is a quadriplegic sailor, regularly sails a Martin 16, but is unable to remain in the boat for the 11-15 hours needed to complete the race. This year, he was able to control his Martin 16 from his pontoon boat. The same hardware and firmware could also work with other devices that can be run using a rate controller, for example, an all-terrain vehicle. To find out more about the Martin 16 and its Power-Assist System, visit **www.martin16.com**.

The Standards Council of Canada has established a Canadian Advisory Committee to provide input to a working group established under the Joint Technical Committee of the International Organization for Standardization and the International Electrotechnical Committee. The ISO/IEC JTC 1 Special Working Group on Accessibility (JTC1 SWG-A) is in the process of developing a set of user needs that relate to accessibility of information and communication and related technologies' standards, as well as an identification of the national and international accessibility standards that already exist in this field and the development of a gap analysis methodology. Mary Frances Laughton is a member of SWG-A and Deb Finn represented her in July at a meeting of the Task Group struck to develop the standards inventory and gap analysis. To read the Canadian position paper and to follow the work of SWG-A, visit **www.incits.org/tc_home/ia/iadocreg.htm**.

On August 16, Gilles Pepin was named Acting Chief Executive Officer of HumanWare. The acting appointment came a week after the death of Humanware founder and CEO Dr. Russell Smith in an air crash in his native New Zealand. Gilles was president of VisuAide at the time of its merger with Pulse Data International and is now president of HumanWare Canada. His appointment as Acting CEO is expected to last up six months, during which time the Humanware Group Board hopes to identify and appoint a new CEO. Gilles, an existing member of the group board, will continue to be based in Montreal, but will travel to New Zealand as required to meet and work with senior management. In a statement released by the company, Gilles said, "Every member of our company, worldwide, is determined to carry on Russell's great work, and make him proud of us. HumanWare is an amazing company with a wealth of very talented staff, and we will continue to be the most successful and most innovative company in our industry."

The Adaptech Research Network (**www.adaptech.org**) recently completed a study whose goal was to explore obstacles and facilitators to college studies. Part of this research involved asking both students with and without disabilities about what made their college studies easier and harder. While students with disabilities indicated that disability-related accommodations were important facilitators, for the most part these students mentioned the same facilitators as their non-disabled peers. Similarly, students with and without disabilities shared most of the same obstacles. The main difference here was that students with disabilities cited disability-related issues, such as health, as a major obstacle. You can download and read the final report's Executive Summary. English versions are available in PDF **http://adaptech.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/pubs/PAREA05FinalReportExE.pdf** and in Word **http://adaptech.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/pubs/PAREA05FinalReportExE.doc**. French versions are available in Word **http://adaptech.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/pubs/PAREA05FinalReportExF.doc** and in PDF **http://adaptech.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/pubs/PAREA05FinalReportExF.pdf**

Karen McCall of Karlen Communications (**karlen.communications@primus.ca**) has authored a book to help anyone working with PDF documents to ensure the accessibility and usability of their documents. "Accessible and Usable PDF Documents: Techniques for Document Authors" (ISBN 0-9738246-1-1) provides readers with many of the solutions they need to move from beginner to intermediate levels of PDF document creation and repair. It also gives a foundation for repurposing your documents for PDF, DAISY or Braille formats. The book is only available through IRTI, Innovative Rehabilitation Technology, Inc., whose Catalogue web site is **www.irti-cat.peachhost.com/ct_CGdaisytalkingbookproducts.htm** and their E-mail address is **info@irti.net**.

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **www.at-links.gc.ca**. At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Mary Frances Laughton or Deb Finn
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4316 or 613-990-4297 fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
email: **adio@crc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Publications

Industry Canada Industrie Canada

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

Fall 2005

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 25

World Usability Day 2005

November 3, 2005 was World Usability Day (**www.worldusabilityday.org**) with coordinated events occurring in 70 cities and 30 countries around the world. In Ottawa, the event was hosted by Carleton University's Human Oriented Technologies Laboratory (HOTLAB). Local organizers and participants included representatives from industry, academia and government - highlighting the universal appeal of this topic. The event was a showcase of the research, products, methods and tools that are available to help make a more usable world.

Mary Frances Laughton, ADIO, and Chuck Letourneau of Starling Access Services (**www.starlingweb.com**) had a table at the showcase where they demonstrated the Accessible Procurement Toolkit (**www.apt.gc.ca**) and talked about the relationship between accessible design and usability.

Later that day, Mary Frances and Chuck took part in a world wide webcast organized by Jim Tobias of Inclusive Technologies and Steve Jacobs of the IDEAL Group. Mary Frances' presentation was titled: "Towards E-Inclusion in Canada". More than 25 speakers presented on topics such as: Accessibility on the web; Mainstream accessibility and assistive technology; Laws, regulations, and policies accessibility in Europe; Accessibility in Japan; Accessibility in the USA; Disabled user involvement; Corporate accessibility programs; Speech technologies; Public sector accessibility programs; Accessible voice telecommunications; and Emerging Technology Services.

An important outcome of the preparations for World Usability Day was the formation of the Ottawa Usability Consortium (**http://ottawausability.org/**). Their vision states, "By increasing and supporting awareness and practice of usability, the Ottawa Usability Consortium aims to make government, industry, commerce, and education in the Ottawa area a usability-oriented multi-faceted community."

Other Ottawa events related to World Usability day include:

1. "Usability Bootcamp: Making Your Websites and Software Easy to Use"

On November 22, 2005 CapCHI (Ottawa's Special Interest Group on Computer-Human Interaction - **www.capchi.org/workshop.html**) hosted a full-day workshop on an Introduction to Usability. This program was designed for developers, web architects, managers, executives, and anyone else who needed to learn about usability.

2. "Ottawa's eGov Usability Showcase"

The first ever e-Gov Usability Showcase will bring together government, industry and usability professionals to share their experiences of designing government applications and services to meet user needs. This event takes place in Ottawa on December 8 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the National Library of Canada Auditorium, 395 Wellington Street. Registration is through Maskery and Associates' Web site at: (**www.maskery.ca/egovshowcase**) and admission is free.

Toronto Rehabilitation Institute Announces New Scholarship for Grad Students with Disabilities

A Canadian bank is funding a new scholarship for graduate students with disabilities who wish to conduct research relating to rehabilitation. The TD Bank Financial Group Scholarship in Rehabilitation-Related Research for Graduate Students with Disabilities will provide University of Toronto graduate students with funding to conduct work leading to a master's or doctoral degree.

The scholarship has been established at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute and will be for the period from September 2006 to April 2007 and will be renewable for an additional year depending on satisfactory performance. The scholarship will be for $20,000, with an individual supplement to be provided to help meet special costs of attending graduate school that are incurred as a result of the student's disability. Eligible graduate students must have a disability and the fields of study must relate to rehabilitation but are not limited to any particular discipline. For example, studies may include but are not limited to rehabilitation sciences, health administration and engineering.

The application and additional information will be available at a later date in the Research section of the Toronto Rehab website at **www.torontorehab.com**. In the meantime, please forward your contact information to Research Administration and you will be informed when the application is available:

Research Administration
Toronto Rehabilitation Institute
550 University Avenue, #1202
Toronto ON M5G 2A2 Canada
Tel: 416-597-3422, ext. 3081
Fax: 416-597-3031
Email: **ward.lois@torontorehab.on.ca**

IDEAS 2005
- by Chuck Letourneau, Starling Access Services

Over the past few years I have attended several events that dealt with Section 508 of the US Rehabilitation Act. I've noticed that attendees at such events are now less likely to ask, "Why should I do this" and increasingly ask, "How can we do this better". IDEAS 2005, the Interagency Disability Educational Awareness Showcase, which I attended in Washington, D.C. this September on behalf of the Assistive Devices Industry Office, was no exception.

In the words of the organizers, IDEAS...

"is held annually to improve the awareness of Section 504 & 508 which protects the rights of disabled persons in any program or activity receiving federal funds and requires that federal agencies' electronic and information technology is accessible to all people with disabilities. As the most comprehensive educational conference and showcase, IDEAS 2005, is where [US] federal employees and contractors go understand the regulations and requirements necessary to support Section 508 compliance."

This was the third annual event and, according to organizers, approximately 2500 people were registered - substantially higher registration than in previous years. The conference consisted of three parallel tracks of educational or informational sessions and a "trade show" for agencies, vendors and manufacturers to demonstrate their best practices or products.

Educational sessions ranged in topic from primers for newcomers to generic legal advice for agencies to industry panels discussing how they are responding to agencies' demands for accessible products and services. Government panellists described best practices being applied in their organizations and agencies and vendors demonstrated tools and techniques for aiding compliance.

The trade show was well balanced, including manufacturers, developers and vendors of both assistive and mainstream electronic and information technologies addressing a wide range of systemic barriers and physical limitations.

One Canadian company - NetCentric (**www.net-centric.com**), of Ottawa, had a booth to demonstrate their Adobe PDF Section 508 accessibility compliance testing and repair tools.

Between sessions I was able promote Industry Canada's Accessible Procurement Toolkit. Especially useful were discussions I had with the developers of the General Services Administration's "Buy Accessible Wizard" (**www.buyaccessible.gov/**).

Talking Web Sites are now a Reality

- by Greg Gay
University of Toronto
Adaptive Technology Resource Centre

The University of Toronto's Adaptive Technology Resource Centre (ATRC) has been involved in promoting accessibility for many years and continues to be a leader in the area of accessible Web-based technologies.

The latest addition to the ATRC collection of tools is the ATalker text-to-speech utility, which finally makes it possible to create talking Web sites. The technology to delivery Web-based speech has been around for nearly a decade, but up until now it has not been implemented in any practical manner. ATalker promises to change that.

The first release of ATalker is available as an add-on module for the ATutor Learning Content Management System, which is used to deliver online courses. Students can use ATalker to read text displayed on the Web aloud by generating

speech files that can be played in most multimedia players. For example, a student might take their course notes and turn them into MP3 speech files, load them into a player, and listen to their notes as they would any MP3 music file.

Instructors on an ATutor system have the same tools available to them as students, with the added ability of saving speech files as a supplement to course content. Students taking a course in ATutor could simply select an "Audio Introduction" link, for example, and have a summary of the week's topic read to them.

Administrators can create different voices for their ATutor systems, so that when a student uses the keyboard to tab through the links on a page, or holds a mouse pointer over an ATutor feature, those features are read out loud. When users complete an action in ATutor, such as posting a forum message or submitting a registration form, the feedback message that follows can also be read aloud.

For people with disabilities, particularly the ones that affect reading ability, a tool like ATalker can make online learning much easier. Students can simply listen to course notes, or listen while they read, improving comprehension by processing information through dual perceptual modes. From a "curb cut" perspective, ATalker can be just as useful for those who do not have difficulties reading. Audio notes, multi-tasking (i.e. listening to course notes while typing a summary), or using the ATalker reader as a means of learning a new language are all examples of how an adaptive technology such as this can benefit everyone.

ATalker is based entirely upon open source software. The primary technology underlying ATalker is the Festival Text-to-Speech System, developed at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. The Festival system utilizes a number of open source audio encoders as well, including LAME, OggEnc, and BladeEnc, which take the speech output from Festival and compresses it, greatly increasing the speed at which the files are transported over the Web. ATalker itself is programmed in the open source PHP programming language.

Looking toward the future, the next step in ATalker's evolution will be to generalize the utility to work with any Web-based application or content, so Web application developers and content authors can make their Web sites speech-enabled.

Further work is planned to extend ATalker's support of the SABLE and SSML markup languages. These formatting languages are similar to HTML, and allow

authors to customize voice output with a full range of speech attributes. SABLE and SSML are both easier to learn than HTML, with only a small number of tags and speech attributes to understand. With these markup languages, one can generate an endless variety of speech patterns including a child's voice, a French speaker reading English, female and male speakers engaged in a conversation, a reader speaking in Spanish, and so on.

The future of the Web as primarily a text and graphics medium is changing. In the coming months and years, speech-based Web sites will become a reality. Imagine using your telephone to surf and listen to the Web. Imagine downloading content from a Web site onto your MP3 player, and listening to it on the ride home from work, or school. Imagine listening to lecture notes or the monthly financial reports during your daily workout. Imagination is all that limits the possibilities for the talking Web.

Audio, unlike visual information, does not require immediate physical proximity with the information being conveyed; a person can hear things over a greater distance than they can see them. This opens up a whole new way of using the Internet. Web surfers will no longer have to stare into a screen to use the Internet. Coupled with speech-to-text, often referred to as voice recognition software, the Web can eventually become a hands- and eyes-free learning environment.

For details about ATalker, the technologies that have gone into its creation, or to try it for yourself, browse through the following resource sites or contact Greg Gay at: **g.gay@utoronto.ca** .

ATalker
www.atutor.ca/atalker/

Festival Text-to-Speech System
www.cstr.ed.ac.uk/projects/festival/

SABLE Markup Language
www.bell-labs.com/project/tts/sable.html

Synthesize Speech Markup Language (SSML)
www.w3.org/TR/speech-synthesis/

Technovision
- by Mary Frances Laughton, ADIO

I was privileged to attend the 2005 version of Technovision held in Quebec City Friday September 23. This was a unique opportunity to discover the latest in software and hardware products such as screen readers, large print software, Braille display devices and embossers, CCTVs and reading devices, notetakers, electronic agendas, accessible phones and pocket PCs, digital book readers, GPS orientation devices, telescopes, lenses, independent living aids and more! There were several hundred visitors from all areas of Quebec and other parts of Canada and the northern US to visit the booths and attend various presentations given by leading developers and promoters of assistive solutions for persons living with vision loss. Gilles Pepin, Acting President of HumanWare was the keynote speaker.

The programme of speakers can be found at:
www.inca.qc.ca/fr/technovision/TV2005/horaire.eng.htm

A picnic table everyone can enjoy:
Making Ontario's parks and public spaces more accessible
by Sachin Bhutani, Ontario March of Dimes

In a move to make Ontario's community spaces more accessible for everyone, Ontario March of Dimes' (OMOD) talented DesignAbility(R) volunteers have created a universally accessible picnic table that provides easy access for two wheelchair users and four ambulatory users.

The AccessAbility(R) Table, constructed entirely of recycled materials, is easy to use because its legs are positioned in the centre of the table and therefore do not impede people using wheelchairs or other mobility devices. Other features include a built-in chessboard, a rust-proof stainless steel frame, and a permanent mount that protects against theft and damage.

"Our goal is to get the tables installed across the country, not only in recreational settings, but in business and residential areas, too," says Elaine Darling, DesignAbility Coordinator. The AccessAbility Table is just one of more than 100 products created by DesignAbility volunteers skilled in woodworking, metalworking, electronics, and engineering. These volunteers create new devices, or adapt existing ones, to meet the needs of children and adults with physical

disabilities.

In May 2003, the AccessAbility Table was officially unveiled as a way for government and corporate sponsors to help increase community participation for all Ontarians. Ontario March of Dimes has now made the table available for purchase by individuals wishing to make a dedication to a special person or event.

The table features a prominent area for personal dedication, messages, or logo etchings. Sponsors receive a tax receipt for 100 per cent of the cost, and the professionals at OMOD make all the arrangements with municipalities or property owners for the table's installation.

"Sponsorship of an AccessAbility Table provides many benefits,' says Neil Gallaiford, Interim Director of Fundraising. "Not only is it a unique and meaningful way to honour a loved one, but purchase of the AccessAbility Table will help more people with physical disabilities to enjoy Ontario's beautiful parks and public places.

Finally, proceeds from the sale go toward supporting the programs and services of Ontario March of Dimes." For more information on sponsoring an AccessAbility Table, please visit **www.dimes.on.ca** or call 1-800-263-3463, ext. 250.

News Bits

Compusult (**www.compusult.nf.ca)** has been busy over the past few months. In March, they completed a project for Transport Canada entitled "Study of Automated Dispensing Machines and Automated Information Kiosks" whose objective was to assess and report on current and future technologies that will make such devices accessible to persons with disabilities. In August, they delivered eleven Caption Display units to Lenoir-Rhyne College in Hickory, NC that have been installed around the campus to provide real-time and scripted captioning for deaf and hard-of-hearing students and personnel at the college. In September, Compusult delivered a Sales-Talk system to the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) for installation in their technology center. Sales-Talk is the first fully accessible Point-Of-Sale (POS) system for blind merchants and is both speech-enabled and screenreader-friendly. Last but not least, in October, the Mount Pearl, Newfoundland-based company delivered a Vindicator system to WXXI in Rochester, NY to adapt a Wheatstone Generation 3 (G3) digital audio control

console. Compusult's Vindicator NV system makes the digital console controls accessible to a blind engineer who had previously worked with an analogue board, but could not work with the new digital product until now.

At the end of August, Liberty Motor Company Inc. (**www.libertymotorco.com**) and Shoppers Home Health Care (**www.shoppershomehealthcare.com**) announced an agreement for the exclusive nationwide sales and distribution of Liberty's popular wheelchair accessible minivans. "This partnership gives Canadian consumers the opportunity to acquire safe, affordable and high quality adaptive mobility products with the personal service and convenience of a local and trusted Canadian icon", said Simon Jones, the president of Liberty. Liberty is a privately held Canadian company whose focus has been on commercial accessible transportation solutions and factory-direct retail sales. Shoppers Home Health Care is a division of Shoppers Drug Mart, with 51 locations, making it the largest Canadian retailer of home health care products and services.

In September, Ottawa's NetCentric released the only product of its kind that tests and repairs PDF documents for accessibility. The CommonLook suite of products and services includes the CommonLook(TM) [US Rehabilitation Act] Section 508 plug-in for Adobe Acrobat(R) QA Professional Editions and the CommonLook(TM) for HTML Government of Canada, Corporate and S508 Editions. They also offer services to make HTML/PDF documents accessible or to convert between formats. For information about these and other NetCentric products and services, visit their Web site or contact Andrew Oestreich, Business Development, NetCentric, tel: 613-270-9582 ext. 204, mobile: 613-291-6327, fax: 613-270-0574 email him at: **aoestreich@net-centric.com** or visit **www.commonlook.com/pdf** .

On September 19, HumanWare announced that Victor Reader Wave is now shipping. Based on the popular Victor Reader Vibe, the world's first mainstream MP3 player adapted to play DAISY books, the Wave has the same advantages of an adapted mainstream player, but includes many enhancements over the Vibe: the clam shell style lid has been modified to use the telephone style keypad of the Victor Reader Classic player; an enlarged file system to play complex DAISY books; expanded memory to store hundreds of bookmarks; it saves the playback position of DAISY, MP3 and music CDs; audio prompts have been added for MP3 playback; and learning disabled users will benefit from a larger screen with text feedback for commands and display of book title and current section heading. The Wave is currently only available in English, with more languages to follow soon. Visit **www.visuaide.com/hw/en/distributors.asp#victor** for more information.

On September 26, Newfoundland and Labrador's Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment announced $79,000 in funding for the Adaptive Technology Program with the province's Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC: **www.ilrc.nf.ca/**). "The Adaptive Technology Program is a real step forward in connecting persons with disabilities to the information highway", said Minister Joan Burke. "...This program will help residents across the province, who may not have access to computer technology, benefit from opportunities for innovative learning, skills development and improved access to government service." Newfoundland and Labrador residents who want to know more about the APT should contact the ILRC at 4 Escasoni Place, St. John's, Newfoundland & Labrador A1A 3R6, tel.: 709-722-4031, Regional Toll Free: 1-866-722-4031, TTY: 709-722-7998, fax: 709-722-0147, email: **info@ilrc.nf.ca** or visit their Web site.

On October 19, IntelliTools, Inc. and Madentec Limited (**www.madentec.com**) announced the launch of a new joint product called IntelliSwitch at the Closing the Gap conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. IntelliSwitch is a flexible interface for the computer, providing wireless access to most switch accessible software from IntelliTools, Madentec's Discover software and other programs. Users simply install its driver software, plug its small receiver into a USB port and plug a switch into one of its five switch ports. The computer can now be controlled by one or more wireless switches from up to twenty feet away. To find out more about this new product, visit Madentec's Web site, contact Mary Senger, Marketing Manager, Madentec Limited, 4664 99th Street, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 5H5, tel.: 1-877-623-3682, e-mail: **marys@madentec.com** or you can also visit the IntelliTools Web site at: **www.intellitools.com** .

Also in October, Special Needs Computer Solutions Inc. (**www.SpecialNeedsComputers.ca**) introduced a 100% Touchless keyboard. Compact in size at 12" X 6", the keyboard detects a finger optically so there are no moving parts and no domes to crack. The user's finger is detected by a matrix of infrared sensors with drift free technology. To find out more about the Touchless Keyboard and Special Needs' other products, visit their Web site or contact Terry Scott, Special Needs Computer Solutions Inc., 50 Niagara St., St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 4K9, tel.: 905-641-4922, fax: 905-641-3406, e-mail: **Terry@SpecialNeedsComputers.ca**.

This October, Vancouver-based PDG Product Design Group Inc. (**www.PDGmobility.com**) unveiled a new approach in manual wheelchairs for people with significant disability at two major trade shows, REHACARE, in

Dusseldorf, Germany and MEDTRADE in Atlanta, Georgia. The Astrotilt is a manual-tilt wheelchair that enables adults and children with disabilities to do much more for themselves, increasing self-esteem, reducing dependence on care-givers and saving patient-care dollars. Manual-tilt wheelchairs are not a new idea, but the Astrotilt (and the Astrotilt Jr.) is designed so that in many cases, the user can propel, tilt and gain access to tables and desks without assistance. PDG president, Phil Mundy, says that his company "is focussing on enabling individuals with more involved disability in an effort to make [them] more independent. Tasks like independent wheeling, independent shifting or body position in space, and gaining access to desks and tables without assistance is what PDG is all about." For more information about the Astrotilt and PDG's other mobility products, visit their Web site or contact Phil Mundy by phone at 604-323-9220 or email at **pmundy@PDGmobility.com**.

The first speech-recognition software designed for students with learning disabilities has been launched. SpeakQ was developed at the Bloorview MacMillan Children's Centre in Toronto with funding from the U.S. Department of Education and is available from Quillsoft. With SpeakQ, students speak a word or phrase and see it displayed in a box with four alternate words or phrases that the software predicts. They can click on each word or phrase to hear it spoken before selecting the correct one and inserting it into their document. The product is integrated with the WordQ word prediction software that was also developed at Bloorview MacMillan. To find out more about these products, contact Quillsoft 2416 Queen Street East, Toronto, Ontario M1N 1A2, call them at 1-866-629-6737 or 416-698-0111, fax them at 416-698-1555, email them at **sales@quillsoft.ca** or visit them on the Web at **www.wordq.com** .

On November 22, a team or Toronto and Vancouver engineers captured first prize in an international competition. Dr. Alex Mihailidis of the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute and Jesse Hoey of the University of British Columbia led a research team that developed an anti-collision system for powered wheelchairs, an advance that could provide new independence for wheelchair users with cognitive disabilities. The top prized of $10,000 (US) was awarded in the CanestaVision design contest, sponsored by San José, California-based Canesta Ltd. The prize-winning research is part of a larger study of anti-collision wheelchair systems run by Toronto Rehab, with funding from the Candian Institutes of Health Research. Trials are taking place at Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre in Toronto.

The Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres (CAILC: **www.cailc.ca**) announced its national kick-off of the UN International Day of Disabled Persons would take place on Friday, December 2, as the actual Day falls this year on a Saturday. Its theme this year is "Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Action in Development". In Ottawa, the event will be marked with information tables and a lunch at the Westin Hotel. In addition to celebrating the International Day of Disabled Persons, the CAILC event will also celebrate the 20th anniversary of Section 15, the Equality section of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Mary Gusella, Chief Human Rights Commissioner, will give an address and the Minister of Social Development, the Honourable Ken Dryden, has also been invited to speak. The event will also include the DVD release of the documentary "Murderball", copies of which will be on sale.

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **www.at-links.gc.ca**. At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Mary Frances Laughton or Deb Finn
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4316 or 613-990-4297 fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
email: **adio@crc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Government Publications

Industry Canada Industrie Canada

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

Winter 2006

LIBRARY MAY 18 2006 University of Toronto

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 26

Visit us at CSUN

ADIO will be back again this year at the annual Technology & Disability Conference, which is presented by California State University, Northridge (CSUN) in Los Angeles from March 20-25. If you are attending CSUN, drop by and say hello. You'll find us in Booth Number 336 in the Marriott Hotel's main exhibit hall. Just look for the booth with the big Canadian flag.

This year, our booth will again have product literature on display from various Canadian AT companies and organizations, along with a peek at some of the new and exciting changes we are making to the Accessible Procurement Toolkit.

The North American chapter of the International Commission on Technology and Accessibility (ICTA-NA) is holding an open meeting at CSUN on Thursday, March 23 from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM in the Atlanta-Boston Room of the LAX Marriott Hotel. Speakers are expected to include Cynthia Waddell (Chair, ICTA-NA), Mary Frances Laughton (ADIO), Tim Creagan (US Access Board) and Chuck Letourneau (ICTA-NA). The presentations will cover ICTA's participation in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), updates on accessibility initiatives in both the Canadian and US federal governments and general information about ICTA-NA. Everyone is welcome. You'll find late-breaking news about the meeting in the Industry Canada booth.

Accommodation Can Increase Productivity

Alan Cantor defines accommodation as "the art and science of treating people differently as a means to treat them equally."

For 18 years, this Toronto-based consultant has been working with employers and employees with disabilities across the country to develop workplace accommodations that improve the individual's performance and productivity. A case study recently posted on his Web site at **www.cantoraccess.com/csun2006-casestudy.htm** illustrates how keyboard training and the use of hotkey macros helped quadruple the productivity of one of his clients. This was not an isolated case. (For those of you attending the CSUN Technology and Disability conference, Mr. Cantor will be presenting his case study findings there on March 24.)

"I see my role as a facilitator", Mr. Cantor (**www.cantoraccess.com**) says, explaining what he does when he is hired to develop accommodation strategies for a worker. "I'm going in there to make things easier, to make a difference." No two

accommodations are identical, he says, citing the example of identical twins with the same disability who do very different jobs and who require very different accommodations to carry out their work; a teacher and an accountant for example. He says he considers 15 different but complementary accommodation strategies, usually drawing on four or five of them, to design an appropriate accommodation. "The easiest and usually no-cost accommodation is to change the physical environment", Mr. Cantor notes, explaining that it is sometimes as simple as rearranging the equipment in a treatment room to allow a blind physiotherapist to move about without the probability of colliding with items that have been relocated by another practitioner; or rearranging office furniture so that a wheelchair user can access his or her desk without having to do a three point turn upon entering the office. Such changes are not always immediately obvious to either the employer or the employee.

Physical access improvement is just one aspect of the service Mr. Cantor provides his clients. He is also an industry leader in providing users of high tech equipment such as computers with access methods that are better suited to their needs and that can increase their productivity. Since 1998, Mr. Cantor has been providing training workshops to AT (assistive technology) professionals, in which he demonstrates counter-intuitive techniques to make computers more usable to people with a wide range of disabilities. There is now a small but growing population of AT professionals who are able to implement these techniques and can provide specialized training. "But", says Mr. Cantor, "there's still not a lot of cultural knowledge and cultural skills out there to identify the way tasks can be morphed to become accessible. Macros are often what's needed, not mouse emulators, to improve productivity. A combination of macros, user interface modifications and custom commands will often reduce physical strain on the worker's body, reduce eyestrain, decrease mental effort, reduce the time it takes to carry out repetitive tasks and increase the worker's accuracy."

But not all accommodations are actually simple, he adds. For workers who use computers, barriers unintentionally introduced by software developers can result in the need for extremely complex accommodations. "What I'd like is to be able to talk to software programmers to reduce the amount of customization that's needed to make their applications usable for people with disabilities. I'm convinced that 90% of the problems [encountered when a user needs alternative input or output methods to use an application] would evaporate if software engineers tossed aside the mouse and used only the keyboard to test their software." He points out that in the organizations in which he has designed accommodations, the technical people are generally quite receptive to his recommendations. They rarely object to the changes he suggests, although he sometimes encounters reluctance to permit the loading of macro software designed to facilitate the full use of applications, on corporate systems.

Managerial support is one of the keys to a successful workplace accommodation. Many fail, he says, because of a lack of managerial support and the manager largely sets the tone for how well an accommodation will be accepted within a work unit. With good awareness training for all employees and an understanding of the accommodation policies being implemented, accommodations are better positioned to succeed. Without this support and understanding, an employee with a disability may find the accommodation does not suit his or her needs and the work environment can be "poisoned" by resentments, jealousies and misunderstandings. "Not accommodating workers who need it reduces productivity and makes for unhappy employees. It's a systemic problem. Workplace accommodation", insists Mr. Cantor, "is integral to good working conditions."

There's a real payoff both for the accommodated worker and for the employer. In the case study Mr. Cantor has posted on his Web site, he states that the cost for the accommodation was about $4,000, including the macros provided to enable the employee to more efficiently use the applications required to complete her assigned tasks and training in their use. The employee, who had been experiencing back spasms caused by her use of a mouse found the spasms abated significantly. She also found that tasks that had initially taken her an hour to complete could now be accomplished in 16 minutes. Mr. Cantor estimates that the accommodations provided to this employee increased the value of her work by $50 a day and that they would therefore pay for themselves in four months.

"Many of my clients are professionals: doctors, lawyers, accountants and I also work with people in blue-collar jobs. What they all have in common is significant disabilities and the ability to be extremely productive in their fields. Their disabilities are irrelevant to their ability to do a job," he says, "if they are accommodated."

As Mr. Cantor says, whether they are simple or complex, job accommodations are "not rocket science." True, but they can make a "rocket science" difference in the quality of a person's worklife.

More New Features in APT

The Accessible Procurement Toolkit (APT: **www.apt.gc.ca**) continues to add new content and features to make it even easier to use.

We have added improved search routines that allow you to search the Toolkit for keywords or phrases. The Toolkit also gives you the option of searching for specific information by entering UNSPSC codes. This is in addition to the GSIN or FSC/PSC codes we had previously added to it.

You will find some new product categories under the Office Furniture section, in a

subsection called "Office Supplies". This new section will provide you with some ergonomic and/or environmental advice regarding such items as hole punches, staplers and marker pens (we recommend using non-toxic markers for both flip charts and white boards.) Rest assured, we will continue to add content to this and other sections of the Toolkit as information becomes available.

You will also see that the clauses taken from the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standard on Accessible Design for the Built Environment and the CSA's guideline on Ergonomics have been reorganized to make clearer the link between standards and how they apply to your procurement of equipment, furniture, etc.

Last but not least, we have added a button to click on to get a printable version of requirement clauses. We think this will make it easier for you to cut and paste requirements into your procurement documents.

Saskatoon Company Now the Maker of Stove Guard

Save On Security Systems Inc of Saskatoon is now manufacturing a revolutionary stove fire prevention safety device. Stove Guard dramatically reduces the chance of a stovetop fire starting by automatically turning the stove elements off when it detects that no one is present in the cooking area of the kitchen.

Don Uhrich is the President of Save On Security. "We had been selling Stove Guard for a number of years and last year, we purchased the patent and all rights to it from Applied Devices. Since then, Save On Security has been its manufacturer and distributor."

Stove Guard is a unique safety device that uses advanced technology to control the stove's electrical system. It's easy to install and use, with a power control box connected between the stove plug and wall outlet and a small sensor/timer unit that mounts to an upper cabinet or to the wall near the stove. Total installation and setup time is about 10 minutes and doesn't require the use of a professional. The device is also UL and CSA approved for use in Canada and the US.

Stove Guard is recognized by Fire Prevention Officers and Occupational Therapists as an effective safety device for people with Alzheimer's and other conditions that involve memory loss, allowing people to remain in their homes and to live more independently. This May, the magazine Consumer Reports will run a feature on kitchen fire prevention in which Stove Guard is highlighted as a good device to use to prevent kitchen accidents caused by someone leaving a pot or pan on the burner too long, simply forgetting it while engaged in other activities.

To find out more about Stove Guard and Save On Security's other personal safety/security devices, visit **www.stoveguard.ca** or **www.save-on-security.com**, call them at 306-931-3707 or toll-free at 1-800-931-3707, or email them at: **sales@save-on-security.com** .

ATRC and Web-4-All

The University of Toronto's Adaptive Technology Resource Centre (ATRC) is asking assistive technology vendors to make their products interoperable with Web-4-All.

The Web-4-All software system was developed by ATRC to make it easy to configure AT installed on multi-user public access computer workstations to provide specialized access to the Internet for people with disabilities. This interoperability can be achieved by writing a software configuration plug-in which will permit Web-4-All to launch and configure the AT according to the user's preferences. ATRC will provide technical support to plug-in developers during February and March.

For more information on this, please contact the ATRC via email at: **general.atrc@utoronto.ca**.

RI - ICTA members Active in World Summit on Information Society

- by Betty Dion, ICTA Global

Members of the Rehabilitation International's ICTA Commission (International Commission on Technology and Accessibility) were actively involved in the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Tunisia from 16-18 November 2005. The event was extremely well attended, with over 25,000 people descending on Tunis for the conference. At the close of the Summit, participants adopted the Tunis Commitment and Tunis Agenda for the Information Society.

The Global Forum on Disability, a two-day event organized by Hiroshi Kawamura, provided an opportunity for fruitful exchange of ideas and presentations on how people with disabilities are using and can benefit from the use of information technologies. On the opening day, Catherine Roy, a member of ICTA-North America, presented a paper on an e-collaboration initiative in Quebec to build the capacity of people with disabilities. Betty Dion, the Chair of ICTA Global, took part in the closing plenary on opportunities for further action, as well as in a presentation with UNESCO. A declaration was drafted by participants for presentation at the Summit plenary session.

The exhibit area was extremely busy and had information on the accessibility of the information society for persons with disabilities, with booths from South Africa to Sweden. Others provided information on their inclusive technologies and programs to address poverty reduction utilizing information technologies.

A meeting is anticipated in Athens in the next six months, to continue the conversations about internet governance. Information on the Summit, Global Forum on Disability is available in English and Japanese at:

English: **www.dinf.ne.jp/doc/english/prompt/wsisindex.html**
Japanese: **www.dinf.ne.jp/doc/japanese/prompt/wsisindex.html**

For further information on the follow up to WSIS, check out the ICTA Global website at: **www.ictaglobal.org** or contact Betty Dion, Chair of ICTA Global at **icta@bdel.ca**

News Bits

In December, Ottawa's T-Base Communications (**www.tbase.com**) gave Santa Claus a helping hand by preparing braille replies to letters he received from blind and low vision children around the world. The company worked with Canada Post to help the jolly old elf send the responses, as he receives more and more letters each year from his blind and partially sighted young admirers. In the true spirit of the holiday season, T-Base, which has been in the business of providing alternate format contractual and customer management materials since 1994, did the work for free.

Also in December, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB: **www.cnib.ca**) began distributing consumer products by mail order. With a range of over 1,100 items, from canes through talking watches and magnifiers to large print bingo cards, the CNIB is able to provide overnight access to most of the products they sell. CNIB has moved from having retail stores to providing local demo and display functions with mail-order fulfilment of the actual orders from the national service centre. All clients have a 30 day "no hassle" window to return products for exchange or refund. A Web-based online store is planned for a Summer 2006 launch, as well as the existing telephone order desk. You can see the CNIB's catalogue of products at **www.cnib.ca/tech_aids/catalogue/index.htm** and to order, you can either email them at **store@cnib.ca** (English) or **Boutique@cnib.ca** (French) or call them toll-free at 1-866-659-1843. In the Toronto area, call them at 416-486-2500.

In January, HumanWare announced the opening of its Edmonton office, with Steven Phillips as its newly-appointed Western Canada Sales Manager. The office is at 10408 - 124 Street, Suite 400, Edmonton, Alberta T5N 1R5, tel.: 780-447-0513 or (toll-free) 1-866-654-7715, fax: 780-447-2935, email: **ca.info@humanware.com**,

Web: **www.humanware.ca**. In other news, HumanWare is working with the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind to assist in a pilot project to evaluate the distribution of Digital Talking Books (DTB) via the Internet. The objectives for the trial are to find out whether a DTB player and service solution can be designed to replace the postal system with Internet delivery of books and magazines for users of its library who are not computer literate.

AudioVision Canada (**www.audiovisioncanada.com**) has entered into a contract with the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) to describe a selection of film titles from the NFB's vast library. The described versions will be added to the content on the NFB's current website to increase access to it by persons with either a vision or hearing disability. In addition to its existing online material, NFB will be creating a new website focusing on animation that will also feature described titles. Described video is currently incorporated into the regulator commitment of many major broadcasters in Canada. AudioVision Canada provides description services to these broadcasters as well as to producers looking to expand the audience that can fully enjoy their programming. They also have a library of more than 500 described movies, including classic and current films. For information on how to obtain descriptive services, call Khel Baldeo toll free at 1-866-966-7667. To purchase described titles, call John Harris toll free at 1-866-297-7623.

Aroga (**www.aroga.com**) has added some new product lines to its catalogue. The company is now the exclusive distributor for Merlin LCD Enhanced Vision Systems and they are now distributing Voisec Buttons, battery-operated devices which record, store and play short spoken messages. Aroga is also the exclusive Canadian distributor for Code Factory's Mobile Speak Pocket software to make standard PDAs accessible. Last but not least, the company recently moved its Edmonton office to a new and larger location: 510 - 10621 100 Ave., Edmonton, Alberta T5J 0B3 tel.: 780-415-5600, toll-free: 1-877-274-0044, fax: 780-477-9581.

On February 16, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) announced how funds from the deferral accounts of incumbent local exchange carriers (ILECs: Bell Canada, Allstream Inc., Saskatchewan Telecommunications, TELUS Communications Inc., Aliant Telecom Inc., Société en commandite Télebec and the former TELUS Communications (Québec) Inc., now TELUS Communications Inc.) will be used. Up to $650 million from the accounts will support initiatives to expand broadband services to rural and remote communities and improve accessibility of telecommunications services for people with disabilities. The amount will be finalized shortly after the ILECs file updated deferral account schedules, which are due by May 15, 2006. ILECs will be required to consult with provincial governments on proposed broadband initiatives prior to submitting their proposals to the Commission. This will ensure that their plans consider existing government initiatives and priorities. They will also be required to consult and work with the appropriate advocacy organizations for people with disabilities.

In the lead-up to our recent Federal election, the Conservative Party pledged as part of its platform, to draft a National Disability Act, similar to that of the United States. Now that the Tories have formed the government, stay tuned for action on this pledge.

We recently discovered an Ottawa-based company that makes chronic pain relief products for people with arthritis, diabetes, fibromyalgia, etc. WoodHoodz TheraFleece is a company whose goal is to create unique, highly functional, user friendly therapeutic and assistive fleece accessories that provide simple and effective joint, muscle, poor circulation and respiratory pain relief. The company's Web site allows you to shop online and an online catalogue will be added to the site in the near future. To find out more, visit **www.therafleece.com** or contact the company's proprietor, Marta Wood by email at **marta.wood@therafleece.com** or by phone or fax at 613-838-2330.

Congratulations to Jay Drew, the volunteer from the Vancouver chapter of the Tetra Society of North America (**www.tetrasociety.org**) for the superb job he did in crafting the holster that the Olympic flag was placed in, on Vancouver Mayor and Tetra founder Sam Sullivan's wheelchair at the Closing Ceremonies for the XX Winter Olympic Games in Torino, Italy. Sleek and elegant, the holster looked as if it belonged on the chair, not as if it was added as an afterthought, thus showcasing how even a simple adaptive device doesn't need to look clunky. And it worked perfectly too: could there have been a better highlight to the whole Closing Ceremony than the sight of Vancouver's mayor proudly and joyously waving the six-metre flag in a world-class invitation to Vancouver/Whistler in 2010 for the Winter Olympics and Paralympics?

On May 10, the U.K.'s Royal National Institute of the Blind's PhoneAbility group is holding a one-day seminar on "Location-based Services for People with Disabilities" in London, England. There is no cost to attend the seminar, but registration is necessary. For more information, contact Dr. John Gill, PhoneAbility, Royal National Institute of the Blind, 105 Judd Street, London WC1H 9NE, tel.: +44 20 7391 2244, fax: +44 20 7391 2318, email: **johngill@rnib.org.uk**.

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **www.at-links.gc.ca**. At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Mary Frances Laughton or Deb Finn
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4316 or 613-990-4297
fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
email: **adio@crc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Industry Canada Industrie Canada

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

Government Publications

Spring 2006

University of Toronto

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 27

CSUN Wrap-Up

- by Mary Frances Laughton

The 21st Technology & Disability Conference (CSUN) drew more than 3,000 participants and 175 exhibitors over its four-day run next to the Los Angeles Airport. Once again, there was a very visible contingent of Canadians exhibiting, presenting and attending the show. The Industry Canada booth was staffed by Mary Frances Laughton, Chuck Letourneau and for her first CSUN, Ilham Monzer. Visitors to the Industry Canada booth were steady throughout the conference and interest in Canadian assistive technology, products, systems and services and in Canada as a country remains high and enthusiastic. We provided a listing of the 11 Canadian booths on the showfloor, the number of which surprised many visitors.

We demonstrated the Accessible Procurement Toolkit (**www.apt.gc.ca**) and showcased product literature from over 30 of our industry partners. We were able to provide specific information on some products to booth visitors and for those looking for a broader idea of what Canadian companies have to offer, we handed out a kit of information. For those companies where there were specific questions/comments, we have sent detailed emails.

By having a place to meet, Industry Canada provides a focus for Canadians doing business at the conference. The large Canadian flag and our distinctive red and white draperies in a sea of blue booths make us easy to spot in the exhibit hall and we are always happy to have our industry representatives make use of our location in support of their business networking activities.

The planned keynote speaker was unable to attend the meeting due to visa problems so Dr. Harry Murphy, the Founder of the CSUN Center on Disabilities pitched in.

Our Canadian flag pins continue to be a popular give away. Nearly everyone has a positive story to relate about Canada when they come by the booth.

We heard very positive comments on the papers given by our Canadian colleagues. The conference programme can be found at:

www.csun.edu/cod/conf/

As part of our work in LA, we provided information on the standards and business aspects of importing accessible cell phones into Canada, discussed the ability of Canada and the US to better share electronic information materials through improved copyright permissions, provided information on employment in the disability field in

Canada and provided information on the accessibility aspects of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games. We answered questions on business, investment and tourism opportunities in Canada and we responded to enquiries from companies looking for Canadian distributors for their products.

During the conference, we ran a small four-question survey on the Canadian AT industry developed by the University of New Brunswick with whom we are doing a contract study on the size and scope of the industry.

We came away with more than 30 business cards, each of which has an action on the back. Some want more information on investing. Some want to be remembered to friends not present this year. A number of visitors to our booth told us that they were familiar with our newsletter, Accessible News as it had been passed along to them by colleagues and they asked to be added to our distribution list.

There was a lovely memorial tribute to Dr. Russell Smith of HumanWare who was killed in a plane crash last summer. This was an opportunity for his many friends and colleagues who come together at CSUN each year to pay one last tribute to him.

We also had enquiries about some of the products and systems that were developed by companies that have gone out of business. Even though these companies have left the market for various reasons, the accessible technologies they developed continue to enhance Canada's reputation for leading-edge AT development. It also makes the fact that licences were picked up by companies such as Compusult and Sight Enhancement Systems for some of the products developed by now-defunct companies or ones divesting parts of their product lines all that much sweeter.

Clearly, Canadian companies are developing products and systems that international industrial partners recognize as must-haves to integrate with their own technology!

UNB & ADIO Partner on AT Industry Assessment

Beginning earlier this year ADIO entered into a partnership with Ed Biden and the University of New Brunswick to do an assessment of the Assistive Devices Industry. Ed's research interests are in biomedical engineering and he has been involved in assistive technology for more than 20 years. For the project, Ed, along with graduate and undergraduate students, have been looking at data from the Canadian Companies Capabilities database and the extensive mailing lists used by ADIO to get an idea of where companies are distributed across the country, what their interests are and so on.

Over the next few months people and organizations on those lists will be surveyed randomly to gather more information about the industry. The objectives are to understand the industry better in terms of its objectives and also to see where and how the industry recruits employees and how the industry interacts with its clients.

Stay tuned for an update on the project in upcoming issues of Accessible News.

ADIO will be coordinating the e-mail contacts for the survey so don't delete the next message from Deb Finn!

What's new with the Accessible Procurement Toolkit

It was noted that some entries in the Accessible Procurement Toolkit's (**www.apt.gc.ca**) procurement clauses database were actually describing implmentation or usage advice rather than procurement requirements that could be applied in a purchasing document. For that reason, a new link has been added for products or services where such advice is available. Look for the Advice link.

The Search page has been substantially revised. You can now search for entries in the Products/Services, Requirements, Advice, and Environmental factors database by keyword. The keyword-search Results page has also been updated: keywords are highlighted for easy identification.

A new series of drawings have been added to the toolkit to help illustrate some universal design concepts as they apply to products and services. Links to these new resources appear in the requirements of a product, where appropriate. The Design Resources page has direct links to the new information.

A New Company with Old Roots Provides Computer Access Hardware for the AT Market

Dr. Geoffrey Webb, President of Daedalus Technologies, and Jim Meldrum have teamed up to form Adaptive Computer Control Technologies Inc. (or ACCT). Daedalus Technologies is manufacturer of the Daessy mounting system for augmentative communication devices and has been in the Assistive Technology Industry for over 20 years.

According to Jim Meldrum, ACCT will draw on Daedalus' experience but take a different direction with products that "aim to improve the independence of computer users with alternative access requirements". Currently ACCT's product line includes:

Ergodex DX-1, Adaptive Keyboard with moveable and programmable keys;

SecondGuess WriteAssist, word prediction/completion software for Dyslexics;

Daessy, adjustable workstations for wheelchair access;

ACCT - TowerPower, a switch access device to turn a PC on and off; and

ACCT - IndeMouse, a device for computer users who cannot click.

According to Mr. Meldrum, there are more products on the way. ACCT designs and manufactures computer access devices for computer users with physical disabilities. The ACCT website offers a number of features including comprehensive product-information with detailed specifications and instructions, as well as a convenient and secure online ordering system.

To find out more about ACCT products visit **www.acctinc.ca** or contact Jim Meldrum at tel.: 1-866-731-8860 or email: **jimm@acctinc.ca**. .

APEC TEL 33 Workshop

The APEC TEL (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation - Telecommunications and Information Working Group) 33 Workshop "APEC e-Inclusion: Bridging the Digital Divide for People with Disabilities" was held in Calgary on April 23. The workshop's intent was to facilitate cooperation between APEC economies to promote e-Inclusion for persons with disabilities. It addressed a key digital divide issue and will contribute to the development of the Asia Pacific Information Society by promoting greater inclusion of persons with disabilities in the information society, benefiting the region's economy and improving quality of life.
Four background papers written in support of the workshop: two from Canada, one from Australia and one from Japan. The moderator came from Australia and both keynote speakers were Canadians, one representing the disability community and the other from industry. Workshop presenters came from nine economies representing both the disability community and industry. Most of the presentations made during the workshop can be found on the Web at **www.apectel33.ca**.

There were also two technology presentations from Canadian assistive technology (AT) researchers and vendors. HumanWare showed its Victor Talking Book Machine and its Trekker GPS system. The Centre de recherche informatique de

Montréal (CRIM) gave a presentation on its groundbreaking C3Grid (Closed-Captioning computing GRID) project, which will provide multimedia content producers with improved captioning capabilities by automating key aspects of the multimedia production and post-production processes.

Workshop participants were welcomed to Canada by our boss, Keith Parsonage. He introduced the Moderator, Michael Baker from Australia, who gave a very brief overview of the day before in turn introducing Jim Sanders, President of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. Mr. Sanders told the group that designing accessibility at the beginning of a system, service, environment or product makes economic sense. "It is not rocket science." He also stated that good design principles allow persons with disabilities to benefit from the mainstream. Mr. Sanders reiterated the need for an international copyright convention that will allow all those with print disabilities to share e-materials in the same way as those who can use traditional print can share books.

The first workshop panel, "User Needs and Gap Analysis", addressed the user perspective, including the user needs and gaps that exist for people with disabilities. The case was made for using standards as a reference for product design by manufacturers and for procurement criteria within the public sector. It was suggested that standardization is instrumental in the dissemination of accessible Information and Communications Technology (ICT) products. Developing ICT accessibility standards, however, is a tough task because of the difficulty in gathering experts who understand both technologies and needs of people with disabilities. The Japanese development of the JIS X8341 series of standards which the Japanese Government and local governments now uses for procurement and for such activities as Web site development was cited as an example. The importance of literacy and the part it plays in bridging the digital divide for people with disabilities was also highlighted.

Representatives from Chinese Taipei recounted how the implementation of a Web Site Accessibility rating system raised general awareness of website accessibility, and the increased number of accessible government websites. It was noted that government leadership is a key to success and that regulation has fostered research. In addition, a point was made that accessibility initiatives need to be as broadly based as practicable and include many different disabilities.

The second panel, on "New Technologies/Devices and How Industry is Meeting the Demand", explored how industry interacts with the disability community to improve access to new technology. Noting that there are many new telecom technologies and devices which may or may not be accessible to persons with disabilities, it was stated that the number of people who benefit from accessible technology is large and will continue to grow with the aging population. Industry, governments and consumers must continue to work together to develop and work within the standards, policy and conformance infrastructure. It was stated that at least 57% of computer users are

likely to benefit from assistive technology. There is a need to inform developers and provide tools to increase accessibility for all users, not just those who have disabilities.

A moderated discussion followed the presentations in this panel. Topics included affordability and the importance of addressing accessibility needs in the design stage rather than retrofitting existing products. The effect that increasing market size has on price reduction and on shortening the time it takes to bring a product to market was also discussed and the question of what drives industry to be involved and care about accessibility was raised. There was an agreement that there needs to be more partnerships between industry and NGOs, and groups working on ATs.

The third panel was called "Regulatory and Self-Regulatory Approaches". Discussion centred on adopting regulatory measures, while striking the right balance as well as on laws and programs in two of the countries represented on the panel. The necessity of harmonizing international standards in order to achieve policy goals was also discussed. Truly global, industry-led, voluntary standards that provide customer value and facilitate market development for accessible ICT were advocated in this session.

In the fourth panel, "Design and Implementation Considerations – Opportunities and Challenges" the approach of designing telecommunication devices and services that "get it right the first time," i.e. those that are inclusive and apply to all, including people with disabilities was explored. The need to change peoples' attitudes towards the idea of a digital divide was also discussed. One economy's experience with relay services was detailed. Finally, the need for narrowing the digital divide through increased awareness, eliminating illiteracy, improving ICT access and capacity building was stressed.

The "e-Inclusion Capacity Building (Issues and Considerations): panel presented three different economies' approaches to increase capacity in their economy around eliminating the digital divide. These include DAISY Digital Talking Books, a social enterprise for marginalized women working at home facilitated by the use of ICTs and a program of services for blind consumers.

The day was very full, which allowed a number of issues to be brought up by participants. A major issue discussed was the affordability of the new accessible technologies. There was also a lot of discussion about the actual definition of e-inclusion and whether it means only people with disabilities, or if it also includes other groups of people, such as the elderly. The discussions that resulted from the workshop were very promising and many of the delegates agreed that future work would be beneficial for APEC TEL.

US Government Revises its Accessibility Regulations
- by Chuck Letourneau, Starling Access Services

On April 18, the US Access Board announced plans to create a committee to advise them on the refresh of both Section 508 standards and Section 255 guidelines. Section 508 is that part of the Rehabilitation Act that requires the US Federal government to only procure accessible electronic and information technologies. Section 255 is that part of the Telecommunications Act that informs US telephone manufacturers how to ensure their product lines include accessible technologies. The full text of the announcement can be found on the US Access Board's Web site at **www.access-board.gov/news/508committee-notice.htm** .

For many years, ADIO has worked to help the Government of Canada increase accessibility in the workplace by using its procurement power to drive the development of more accessible mainstream technologies and services. To this end, ADIO created the Accessible Procurement Toolkit (APT: **www.apt.gc.ca**), which contains not only requirement statements drawn from sources such as various Canadian Standards Association documents but also numerous citations of requirements found in Section 508 and Section 255. The APT enables procurement professionals to include accessibility requirements in their purchasing plans. The toolkit can also be used by manufacturers or vendors to identify features or design criteria that can make their products or services more accessible - especially if they wish to sell to the US Federal marketplace where such accommodations are required by law.

Feedback needed on a new web site on disability-related policy in Canada
- by Christine Kelly, University of Manitoba and Francis Charrier, Université de Laval

DisabilityPolicy.ca looks at the issues and concerns surrounding disability-related policy in Canada. This site can be viewed at **www.disabilitypolicy.ca**.

The site is intended to serve three main purposes:

To build the capacity of people with disabilities in general and of organizations of people with disabilities more specifically, to respond to issues regarding disability-related policy in Canada;

To be a website that is jointly owned by many organizations of people with disabilities around Canada for the purposes of knowledge-sharing, communication and mobilization; and

To allow researchers, writers and the general public to share their knowledge about the effectiveness of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) as a tool for engaging the disability community in eDemocracy initiatives.

The website arose from a need identified by the Council of Canadians with Disabilities and Canadian Association of Community Living's joint project "Connecting People to Policy". The Dis-IT Research Alliance proposed to take over the website portion of the initiative to facilitate the continuation of the goals of the project.

This site was built by a group of committed volunteers from several different organizations, including: the Canadian Association for Community Living; ARCH: A Legal Resource Centre for Persons with Disabilities; the Council of Canadians with Disabilities; Alliance of Equality of Blind Canadians; Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres; and various Independent Living Resource Centre groups. On behalf of the Advisory Committee we would like to invite you to come and browse our new site. Your feedback will be essential in making this website a truly interactive experience for people in the disability community. Please take the time to tell us what you think.

Disabilitypolicy.ca is trying to meet a high level of website design accessibility standards. If you have any suggestions that will help make our site more accessible, please contact us at:

1. Christine Kelly, Research Assistant (English)
tel.: 204-480-1411, email: **umkell37@cc.umanitoba.ca**

2. Francis Charrier, Research Assistant (French)
tel.: 418-529-9141 ext. 6107, email: **francis.charrier.1@ulaval.ca**

US Firm Seeks Tech, Captioning and Investment Partners

An American company is looking for partners to develop and launch a new service to give deaf and hard of hearing people access to radio content.

Saint Louis, Missouri-based iMobile Access Technologies plans to introduce a system that will provide real-time captioning of radio content to hearing-impaired individuals.

"We will deliver captions to the eyes of the user through our patent pending solution that consists of a receiver and an eye piece," said company founder Stephen Foster, who is himself deaf. "The eye piece projects the captions into the users' field of view

and is portable; this allows the user to engage in simultaneous activity while 'watching' radio."

The company's Chief Technical Officer, Hari (Sam) Samrat says iMAT currently is seeking technology partners, captioning partners and deaf and hard of hearing organizations to participate in various aspects of the launch of the service.

The company's system will use voice recognition and context-based language processors, in conjunction with humans to caption radio programming in real time with a maximum delay of two to three seconds between what is spoken and what is displayed. The company is therefore very interested in identifying captioners and captioning organizations willing to work with it to refine that part of the system.

The company has obtained seed funding for the system, but it is also seeking additional investors. Meanwhile, work continues on the development of a beta version of the caption display.

To find out more about the company and the project, contact Stephen Foster, CEO, iMobile Access Technologies, 210 North Tucker Blvd. Saint Louis, Missouri, USA 63101 tel.: 314-333-0430, email: **sfoster@imobileaccess.com** .

News Bits

On April 28, ICICI Bank Canada honoured Jim Sanders, the President and CEO of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind at its Second Annual Helen Keller Awards Dinner. The event was held at the Ontario Science Centre in Toronto and featured a special screening of a film called "Black", a contemporary version of the Helen Keller story, produced in India. ICICI Bank Canada, a subsidiary of India's second-largest bank, is currently engaged in raising funds for the Canadian Helen Keller Centre, which provides services and training opportunities for deaf-blind Canadians.

In March, Compusult (**www.compusult.nf.ca**) supplied Pima Community College in Tucson, Arizona with three TeleTalk systems to provide full accessibility to Fujitsu telephones for their blind and visually impaired employees. The company continues to supply its Caption Display units to the U.S. National Park Service (NPS) so they can make their video presentations fully accessible to deaf and hearing impaired park visitors. Also in March, they sold their 14th unit to the NPS. This one will be installed at a National Park in California. And from April 20 to 22, Compusult participated in BARRIER FREE 2006 in Osaka, Japan demonstrating their Jouse2, 2-Switch, U-Switch, Scotty LapTop Tray Systems, and other products to a huge number of conference attendees. This is the second year that Compusult has participated in the Canadian booth at this event.

Ottawa's NetCentric (**www.net-centric.com**) recently announced the availability of a free PDF accessibility evaluation service for its Government clients. Called CommonLook Accessibility for PDF, the product is currently in use in both the Government of Canada and the American government. The service, which can be found at: **www.net-centric.com/documents/english/cl_adobe_home.asp**, allows clients to assess the accessibility of their PDF holdings, including documents that contain complex tables or forms. For more information, contact Andrew Oestereich at 613-270-9582, ext. 204 or email him at **aoestereich@net-centric.com**.

Work has begun on the revision of the Canadian Standards Association's (CSA: **www.csa.ca**) accessibility standard B651.1 Barrier-Free Design for Automated Banking Machines. This document was originally published in 2001 and is subject to the CSA's normal review and update cycle for existing standards. Deb Finn is on the committee developing the new version of the standard, which is expected to be available in 2008.

Canadian accessibility experts continue to have a worldwide influence on Web accessibility. This year alone, Derek Featherstone of Further Ahead (**www.furtherahead.com**), an Ottawa-based accessibility consultancy, will be speaking and training in San Francisco, Texas, the UK and Australia, as well as keynoting a conference in Florida. "We've got some top-notch accessibility people in Canada with a great deal of experience in development, testing, user experience and all aspects of Web accessibility. Audiences at these conferences are eager to hear what we've learned and sessions fill up quickly. Whether for ethical or legal concerns, they are enthusiastic about making the Web universally accessible and want in-depth information on specific Web development techniques," says Featherstone. Further Ahead also provides in-house technical training and accessibility audits for government agencies and the private sector in Ottawa and throughout Canada. For more information, contact Derek Featherstone via email at **feather@furtherahead.com**, or call Further Ahead at: 613-599-9784 or 1-866-932-4878 (toll-free in North America).

On June 6, HumanWare Canada announced the launch of the French version of Window-Eyes. This screen reader software for blind and visually impaired users is manufactured by GW Micro and HumanWare did the French version, which is now available direct from HumanWare. For more information, call HumanWare Canada at 1-888-723-7273, email them at **ca.info@humanware.com** or visit their Web site at **www.humanware.ca**.

A group of eleven national disability organizations and resource persons have begun working with Canada's major telecommunications companies (Bell Canada, Allstream Inc., Saskatchewan Telecommunications, TELUS Communications Inc., Aliant Telecom Inc., Société en commandite Télébec and the former TELUS Communications (Québec) Inc.) on the development of a series of projects intended

to improve the accessibility and usability of Canada's telecommunications systems and services. The telecom companies were directed by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunication Commission to earmark at least 5% each of the money held in their deferral accounts to be used in accessibility projects. On June 5, the disability groups met to develop their strategies for working with the telecoms. On the 6, the disability groups met with the telecoms and began the process of establishing a collaborative effort that will culminate in the development of accessibility project proposals. Cathy Moore of the CNIB arranged the meeting, which was held in Toronto. The first day of the meeting was funded by DisIT and the telecoms picked up the tab for Day 2.

On June 16, the CNIB Library awarded the Dr. Dayton M. Forman Memorial Award to Canada Post to honour the 100 years of "free matter for the blind". This system, part of an international agreement, allows braille and audio materials for the blind to be sent post-free. This award has previously been won by Industry Canada.

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **www.at-links.gc.ca**. At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Mary Frances Laughton or Deb Finn
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4316 or 613-990-4297
fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
email: **adio@crc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Government Publications

Industry Canada Industrie Canada

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO) Fall 2006

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 28

US Government Updates its Access Legislation

The US Government's Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) has established an advisory committee to assist it in revising and updating accessibility guidelines for telecommunications products and accessibility standards for electronic and information technology (EIT). The Access Board has invited international input in the process. Industry Canada's delegate on the advisory committee ADIO's own Mary Frances Laughton.

TEITAC's task is to look at the renewal of Section 508 of the US Rehabilitation Act and Section 255 of the US Telecommunications Act, both of which have an impact on the accessibility of goods, systems and services. Section 508 requires the US Federal government to procure accessible electronic and information technologies; it sets out the standards for accessibility. Section 255 requires manufacturers of telecommunication and customer premise equipment to ensure that their products are accessible and usable by persons with disabilities.

There is a webpage at the Access Board website to post announcements and information about the Committee. This webpage will include ONLY publicly available information about the Committee (including the membership list) and any information that is needed for anyone who intends to attend the meetings or find out about the work of the Committee.

When the Access Board published notice of its intent to set up the advisory committee in April, it identified the interests that would be significantly affected by this rulemaking:

Federal agencies;
The telecommunications and EIT industry, including manufacturers;
Organizations representing the access needs of individuals with disabilities;
Representatives from other countries and international standards setting organizations; and
Other organizations affected by these accessibility guidelines and standards.

LIBRARY DEC 13 2006 University of Toronto

The first meeting took place at the National Science Foundation offices in Arlington Virginia on September 27-29. All the member organizations were represented. The work of TEITAC will be carried out in sub-committees. These sub-committees are open to anyone, not just main committee members. The sub-committees and their conveners are formally reported on the TEITAC web-site. They are:

General Interface Accessibility
*Web & Software &
*Telecommunications
Audio/Video
Self Contained/Closed
Desktop/Portables
Subpart A
*Documentation & Technical Support

Industry Canada will participate in those with an *

For more information on TEITAC,
visit: **www.access-board.gov/sec508/update-index.htm**

The next meetings will be in early November. Feel free to contact Mary Frances Laughton if you have any comments.

See what's new on the ADIO Web site

After some creative development by our colleagues Dave Flanagan and Chuck Letourneau, the Assistive Devices Industry Office is pleased to introduce changes to the Canadian R&D Groups and Referral Centres list on the ADIO Web site (**www.at-links.gc.ca/as/**). The new list is called the Canadian Assistive Devices Industry - Information Sources.

Presently, there are 71 organizations listed which were derived from our old list. Some of the changes include:

- 4 new sub-groups according to the type of organization
- Full list alphabetical search with type of organization indicated
- List organizations by the province of origin (Head Office)
- Direct link to the organization's Web site

Many thanks to those of you who recently submitted changes and updates on information these lists provide. For those who wish to submit any changes to the information on their own organization, please forward them by email to: **adio@crc.ca** or by fax: 613-998-5923.

Publications from Public Health Agency of Canada

What are assistive devices? How can they help? Where can you get them? Canadians of all ages, seniors and others with disabilities can overcome barriers by using aids that range from high technology to simple kitchen gadgets. People have improved their quality of life thanks to assistive tools that respond to their particular needs.

Publications entitled "Go For It!" and "Assistive Devices — Info Sheet for Seniors" provide seniors, veterans and people with disabilities with a wealth of information on available assistive devices to facilitate the activities of daily living. Please visit the Web site of the Division of Aging and Seniors, Public Health Agency of Canada at **www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/index_pages/publications_e.htm#injury** . For further information regarding these or any other publications from the Division please contact them by email at: **SeniorsPubs@phac-aspc.gc.ca** .

When You Need Real-Time Captioning

The Canadian Association of Stenotype and Stenomask Technologies (CASST) is a national body of court reporters, CART (Computer Assisted Real-time Translation) providers, and broadcast captioners. Its growing membership is comprised of professionals from each of Canada's provinces. Five of these, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Quebec, have provincial associations that address professional issues at a local level. CASST speaks for its members nationally. To join this organization or for assistance in finding court reporters, CART providers or broadcast captioners, visit the CASST Web site at **www.casst.net** . The Web site also contains links to the provincial organizations.

JTC1 Update

The JTC 1 Special Working Group on Accessibility (SWG-A) met in Brussels at the office of CENELEC from 18-22 September 2006. Canada was represented by Dr. Jim Carter of the University of Saskatchewan and Mary Frances Laughton of ADIO.

The bulk of the work to date of the SWG-A has been the development of a User Needs Listing and a Standards Inventory. The result of both these tasks are at a sufficient state to be considered public.

Some of the resolutions from the meeting follow:

SWG-A establishes the Ad Hoc 9 on User Needs Mapping and Gap Analysis to do the User Needs Mapping and Gap Analysis on sample standards. Ad Hoc Leaders: Dr. Jim Carter (Canada) and Dr.Hajime Yamada (Japan). The following sample standards and initial participants were identified:

Confirm ISO Guide 71 - Ms. Andi Snow-Weaver (US)
Confirm ISO 9241-20 - Dr. Hajime Yamada (Japan) and Ms. Andi Snow-Weaver (US)
JIS X 8341-5 - Mr. Shigetoyo Nomura (Japan)
ISO 9241-171 - Dr. Jim Carter (Canada) and Dr. Gregg Vanderheiden (JTC1/SC35)
WCAG 2.0, UAAG 1.0 and ATAG 2.0 - Ms. Judy Brewer (W3C/WAI)
Section 508 - Mr. Alex Li (US)
Individualized Adaptability and Accessibility for Learning, Education and Training - ISO/IEC 24751 Parts 1, 2 and 3 - Mr. Andy Heath (UK)
FSG Keyboard I/O and FSG AT SPI specification - Ms. Janina Sajka (Free Standards Group)
Section 255 - Dr. Gregg Vanderheiden (JTC 1/SC 35)
ITU-T F.700 and E.135 - Ms. Josée Auber (France)
EN 1332-4 - Dr. John Gill (UK)

A call for additional ad hoc participants will be issued.

SWG-A Brussels Resolution 10: Version 2.0 of the Accessibility Standards Inventory for Computer Hardware, Software, Communications, Public Access Terminals and Consumer Electronics Domains

The SWG-A accepts SWG-A N 211 as mature enough to release as Version 2.0 for the Accessibility Standards Inventory for the Computer Hardware, Software (including application software), Communications (that relate to user interface), Public access terminals including voting machines, and Consumer Electronics (includes multimedia standards) domains.

SWG-A Brussels Resolution 12: Version 1.0 of the User Needs Summary

The SWG-A accepts SWG-A N 212 as mature enough to release as Version 1.0 of the User Needs Summary.

SWG-A Brussels Resolution 15: Establishment of Ad Hoc 11 on Reference Materials for the User Needs Summary

The SWG-A establishes Ad Hoc 11 on Reference Materials for the User Needs Summary to develop and use a template/format to gather reference materials for the

User Needs Summary. Ad Hoc Leader: Ms. Mary Frances Laughton (Canada). Participants: Mr. Toshihiro Suzuki (Japan) and Mr. Michael Takemura (US). A call for additional participants will be issued.

A full listing and access to all the JTC1 SWG-A documents can be found at **www.jtc1access.org/** .

The next meeting will take place in Oslo, Norway in April 2007.

Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Expanded to More Ontario Universities

The Toronto Rehabilitation Institute announced in August that its $20,000 scholarship in Rehabilitation-Related Research for Graduate Students with Disabilities is now available at additional universities. Besides the University of Toronto, students at McMaster University, Ryerson University, the University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University, and York University are now eligible to apply for these scholarships.

"This exciting scholarship is intended to act as a spur to involving people with disabilities in rehabilitation-related research," said Dr. Geoff Fernie, Vice President, Research, at Toronto Rehab.

"We look forward to working closely with scholars from the eligible universities to support their academic and research success and to open doors to careers in rehabilitation research."

With the support of TD Bank Financial Group, Toronto Rehab is able to provide scholarships of $20,000 and a supplement for educational expenses incurred as a result of the student's disability. Applicants must plan to be enrolled in a rehabilitation-related graduate program leading to a masters or doctoral degree at one of the eligible universities.

Fields of study must relate to rehabilitation but are not limited to any particular discipline. Eligible disciplines may include but are not limited to: Engineering, Social Work, Psychology, Medicine, Physical and Occupational Therapy, Kinesiology, Nursing, Recreation and Music Therapy, Nutrition, Pharmacology, Speech-Language Pathology, Biology, Biostatistics, Chemistry, Physics, Early Childhood Education, Architecture, Computer Science, Sociology, and Public Policy and Administration.

The next round of scholarships will be awarded for the 2007/08 academic year, with an application deadline date of May 1, 2007. Applications are encouraged from international students and final year undergraduate students.
For more information on the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute Scholarship in Rehabilitation-Related Research for Graduate Students with Disabilities visit **www.torontorehab.com** or contact Lois Ward at **ward.lois@torontorehab.on.ca**, tel.: 416-597-3422, ext. 7600.

Delegates Meeting at the UN Finalize New Treaty Protecting Rights of Persons with Disabilities

After five years of negotiations, countries meeting at United Nations Headquarters in New York have agreed on a new treaty to protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

"This is the first convention of this magnitude for this century," UN General Assembly President Jan Eliasson said after the agreement was reached on August 25. He told the negotiators that they were conveying to the world "the message that we want to have a life with dignity for all and that all human beings are all equal."

"This marks a great day for the UN and for persons with disabilities," said New Zealand's Ambassador Don MacKay, who chaired the talks through its final sessions. "It's a good convention and it will make a difference for millions of people."

The successful completion of the treaty, after a day of intense negotiations and compromises that capped years of effort, was met with applause by well over a hundred government delegations and hundreds of representatives of disability organizations who participated in the process of crafting the 40-article pact.

Proponents of the convention maintained that the treaty was necessary because persons with disabilities represented one of the most marginalized groups and that their rights had been routinely ignored or denied throughout much of the world.

While the convention does not create new rights, it specifically prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in all areas of life, including civil rights, access to justice and the right to education, health services and access to transportation.

The convention was largely approved by consensus, although there was a vote on a provision concerning "foreign occupation" that was included in the preamble. With five countries voting against, the provision was adopted.

The convention will be formally sent to the General Assembly for adoption at its next session, which begins in September. It will then be open for signing and ratification by all countries.

It is estimated that 10 per cent of the world's population, or about 650 million people, have one or more disabilities.

Accessibility Consultants of Ontario Association Names its First President

Rick Sinclair, of Sinclair Nicholson and Associates has been appointed President of the new Accessibility Consultants of Ontario Association. The new Association is a network for "fee for service" consultants in Ontario. Its purpose is to provide members' clientele with cross disability expertise, and to ensure a high standard of access. The Association provides its members a forum for discussion regarding the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and its related standards

"We first started talking about establishing the Association in June, 2005 and it started getting going in the fall of that year", Mr. Sinclair told us. He also noted that the group is still looking for new members from among Ontario's growing pool of accessibility consultants.

For more information, you can reach Rick Sinclair by email at **info@snaconsulting.ca** .

News Bits

Woodbridge, Ontario's Brookdale Medical Specialties Ltd. (**www.brookdalemedical.com**) has just released its new R2910E Euro Style Wall Pulley. This exercise aid provides easy access for wheelchairs and allows for a full range of exercises for even the most limited needs. Weights start at 2 lb. and increase up to 50 lbs. There are no snapping elastics or tubing, so the pulley is easy to use. For more information, visit Brookdale on the Web, call them at 905-856-5006 or toll-free at 800-655-1155 or email them at: **brookdale.rehabfit@on.aibn.com** .

Special Needs Computer Solutions Inc. of St. Catharines, Ontario (**www.SpecialNeedsComputers.ca**) has introduced the ERICA augmentative communication device to Canada. ERICA uses eye gaze technology to facilitate communication and is also being used by sports professionals for eye control. To find out more about this and other products marketed by Special Needs, contact Terry Scott: 50 Niagara St., St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 4K9, tel: 905-641-4922, fax: 905-641-3406, email: **Terry@SpecialNeedsComputers.ca**

Sinclair, Nicholson and Associates of Kanata, Ontario (**www.snaconsulting.ca**) will join with Nxi Communications of Utah in providing TTY access to the federal government's "1 800 O-Canada" and other call centres, using the NTS TTY network software. NTS is a secure, internally installed text system that is both ASCII and Baudot compatible, allowing deaf and hard of hearing TTY users to access the government phone system. TTY service can be distributed to all workstations on the server. For more information, contact Sinclair, Nicholson at: 377 Pickford Dr., Kanata, Ontario K2L 3P3, call them at TTY: 613-599-1246 or Voice: 613-599-1284 or email them at: **info@snaconsulting.ca** .

In August, Maskery and Associates announced that the company had been acquired by another Ottawa-based firm, Macadamian (**www.macadamian.com**). Maskery will operate as a fully-owned subsidiary of Macadamian and Macadamian's President, Frederic Boulanger, assures Maskery customers that they will receive the same or better service, with the same people. All current projects and agreements will continue. The acquisition also means Maskery customers will have access to software engineering, software testing, and technical writing teams, in addition to all the services they previously received from Maskery.

Congratulations to Automobility Manufacturing Corp. who have been awarded the "Better Business Bureau" Torch Award 2006 for business excellence. Automobility, Canada's largest manufacturer of automotive hand control systems for people with disabilities, is a 16 year old company based in Regina, Saskatchewan and is dedicated to manufacturing and distributing products for people with disabilities on a world wide basis. Automobility products can be seen at **www.automobility.ca** .

Dr. Penny Hartin, former Executive Director of Blindness International, was chosen this summer as the new CEO of the World Blind Union (WBU: **www.worldblindunion.org**). The WBU is the only organization entitled to speak on behalf of blind and partially sighted persons of the world, representing 180 million blind and visually impaired persons from about 600 different organisations in 158 countries. Also this summer, the WBU announced that its Permanent Office is moving to Toronto.

Madentec Limited (**www.madentec.com**) has released Discover Envoy, a mouse and keyboard replacement software for Mac OSX. Discover Envoy software has been designed to provide switch access to mainstream applications which do not have scanning functionality built-in, such as Safari, Mail, iTunes and word processing. A "Discover Envoy hands-on lab for Mac OSX" will be held from 8:00 to 10:30 a.m. on Friday, October 20 at the Closing the Gap (CTG) conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Madentec will also host a hands-on lab called "Independent Switch Scanning Access to Your PC with DiscoverPro and IntelliSwitch" at CTG on October 19 from 2:00 to 4:30 p.m. For more information about Madentec's products, contact Madentec at 4664 99 St., Edmonton, Alberta T6E 5H5, tel: 780-450-8926 or

toll-free: 877-623-3682, fax: 780-988-6182, or by email at: **sales@madentec.com** .

Dr. James Watzke has been appointed to the position of Dean Applied Research at the British Columbia Institute of Technology. The appointment was made at the beginning of the summer.

The Call for Abstracts for the Festival of International Conferences on Caregiving, Disability, Aging and Technology (FICCDAT) remains open until November 6. FICCDAT is an international event that will take place in Toronto from June 16-19, 2007. It will be comprised of five major conferences: Growing Older with a Disability; the 2nd International Conference on Technology and Aging; Advances in Neurorehabilitation; Caregivers: Essential Partners in Care; and the 30th Canadian Medical and Biological Engineering Conference. All applicants are required to submit a 250 word abstract on the topic of their paper/poster. Multiple abstracts are welcome. Applicants will be asked to indicate the appropriate conference for each abstract and whether they would prefer a platform presentation or poster format. Note that it may not be possible to accommodate all requests for platform presentations and applicants may be required to present using the poster format. For more information, visit the FICCDAT Web site at: **www.ficcdat.ca** .

The WEEVAC 6 stretcher, which is designed and manufactured by W. Murphy Enterprises of Deep River, Ontario, has been nominated as one of the "50 Greatest Canadian Inventions" in a poll being conducted by the CBC television series, "The Greatest Canadian". Voting for favourite inventions closed on September 28. The 50 nominees will be showcased and the winner announced during a two-hour CBC TV broadcast on Wednesday, January 3, 2007. WEEVAC is the trademark of an innovative line of emergency evacuation stretcher systems and the WEEVAC 6 is the only stretcher in the world designed to carry six bundled babies to safety in size-adjustable,heat retaining pockets. To find out more about the WEEVAC products, contact Wendy Murphy at W. Murphy Enterprises, P.O. Box 1306, Deep River Ontario K0J 1P0, tel.: 613-584-9473, fax: 613-584-2626, email her at: **info@weevac.com** or visit the WEEVAC Web site at: **www.weevac.com**.

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **www.at-links.gc.ca**. At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Mary Frances Laughton or Deb Finn
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4316 or 613-990-4297
fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
email: **adio@crc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Industry Canada Industrie Canada

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO) Winter 2007

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 29

Visit us at CSUN

ADIO will be back again this year at the annual Technology & Disability Conference, which is presented by California State University, Northridge (CSUN) in Los Angeles from March 19-24. If you are attending CSUN, drop by and say hello. You'll find us in Booth Number 336 in the Marriott Hotel's main exhibit hall. Just look for the booth with the big Canadian flag.

This year, our booth will again have product literature on display from various Canadian AT companies and organizations, along with a peek at some of the new and exciting changes we are making to the Accessible Procurement Toolkit.

Canadian Intelligent Technology Network Launched to Improve Life for Seniors and People with Disabilities

Canadian university researchers and private sector organizations that are developing intelligent technology to improve life for seniors and people with disabilities have formed a first-of-its-kind network to increase collaboration in research and development and improve Canada's competitiveness.

The Intelligent Computational Assistive Science and Technology (ICAST) network, launched last week at York University in Toronto, is a Canada-wide initiative sponsored by York and Ottawa-based Precarn Incorporated, a not-for-profit company that supports the development of new, commercially-viable technologies. The assistive devices R&D network brings together scientists, engineers, clinicians, industry leaders, and representatives of organizations that serve people with disabilities.

"We are putting our heads together to ensure we benefit from each other's research and focus on what is needed, whether it is mobility technology that senses surroundings and helps people with disabilities interact with their environments, or technology that can increase safety for seniors in their homes," said ICAST network chair John Tsotsos, a York computer science and engineering professor who holds the Canada Research Chair in Computational Vision.

LIBRARY
MAY 24 2007
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

The ICAST network concept is a unique research structure in Canada. The network will ensure better alignment of university research capacity with the needs of business and will help to develop Canada's medical devices industry. Academics, industry and others will work in four clusters within the network, focusing on mobility, communication, smart homes and issues pertaining to the elderly. They will collaborate on research, development and commercialization within their fields and will share their results with other clusters, as the issues often overlap.

Researchers are working on a variety of projects including intelligent wheelchairs that are self-guided, wearable robotics, technology that prompts a user with dementia through an everyday task, and smart homes that can anticipate occupants' needs. Commercial applications of some technologies may take some time but others may be available more quickly. For example, York's Tsotsos and Professor Alex Mihailidis, of the University of Toronto and the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, are discussing how to combine their approaches to detecting when a person has fallen; results may be available within a year that could provide an automatic fall detection system in special care homes for the elderly.

Paul Johnston, president and chief executive officer of Precarn Incorporated, said the ICAST network will foster important collaboration among the Canadian academic and private sector research and development communities.

"Technologies for assistive devices can be very complex; this collaboration will apply precious resources to solve tough problems, create unique solutions, and get them to market faster," said Johnston. "Developing solutions together through an assistive technologies R&D network will have enormous social and economic benefit."

Organizations on the steering committee for the network, in addition to York and Precarn, include: the University of British Columbia; University of Toronto; Toronto Rehabilitation Institute; Neil Squire Society; the Health Technology Exchange; LifeLink Systems of Ste-Marie-de-Beauce, Quebec; and Quanser Consulting Inc., of Markham, Ontario.

The collaboration that will be promoted through the ICAST network is essential, said Paul Gilbert, chief executive officer of Quanser Consulting, a world leader in the design and manufacture of state-of-the-art advanced control technology used in a range of applications including robotics and medical assistive devices.
"Industrial partners need confidence that a real market exists for products they develop, and academic researchers in medical fields are close to the end users," said Gilbert. "They can help define the needs and size of the various markets and provide key insights into how to position products so they are accepted by end users. They also help us to understand how technology can be applied in a medical setting, which may significantly improve product design and reduce development time."

LIBRARY
MAY 2 4 2007

Stan Shapson, Vice-President Research & Innovation at York, said York is committed to its role as the home base for the network. "With our outstanding researchers and with more than fifty percent of Canada's medical device companies located within the region surrounding York University, this national network builds on our important regional strengths," he said. "The network will provide important support to continue our collaborations and world-class research, while ensuring the translation of research outcomes into social and economic benefits for Canadians."

York University is the leading interdisciplinary research and teaching university in Canada. York's 11 faculties and 23 research centres conduct ambitious, groundbreaking research that is interdisciplinary, cutting across traditional academic boundaries. Precarn is an independent not-for-profit company that supports the pre-commercial development of leading-edge technologies. Precarn works with Canadian companies who are seeking to commercialize their new ideas to get an edge in global markets. Unlike other research funding programs, Precarn uses a collaborative model that includes a developer, a customer and an academic research partner in every project. This collaboration accelerates development, reduces risk and shares the cost of the R&D. Precarn provides access to an extensive national network of world-class researchers, innovative companies and sources of funding.

For more information, contact Professor John Tsotsos, chair ICAST network, York University, 416-736-2100, ext. 70135, email: **tsotsos@cse.yorku.ca** or Graham Taylor, VP, External Relations, Precarn, 613-727-9507 ext. 230, email: **gtaylor@precarn.ca** .

$526 Million Announced to Combat Homelessness and Extend Funding for Renovation Programs

On December 19, the Honourable Diane Finley, former Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, announced $526 million for the new Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), a strategy aimed at combatting homelessness in communities across Canada and extending Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) renovation programs.

As a part of this $526 million investment, Minister Finley announced $256 million for the two-year extension of CMHC's renovation programs for low-income households. These home modifications help seniors and persons with disabilities remain independent in their homes, and preserve the housing for people who are at risk of homelessness. These programs will help improve the living conditions for some 38,000 low-income people including seniors, persons with disabilities, victims of family violence and Aboriginal peoples.

CMHC renovation programs are delivered in partnership with provincial and territorial governments and are available in all regions of Canada, including First Nations communities. Since 1973, more than 750,000 households have benefited from the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP).

Visit **www.cmhc.ca** or call 1 800 668-2642 for contact information in your area.

A Home that Helps us "Age in Place"

Most people want a home that's beautiful, but Dr. Alex Mihailidis dreams of one that's "intelligent" too – and he's working to make it a reality. Alex Mihailidis is a researcher at Toronto Rehab, part of the University of Toronto. He is developing intelligent assistive technologies and environments to enhance and enable function in older adults, including those with cognitive impairments such as Alzheimer's and related dementias.

Imagine a home where a voice politely reminds you to turn off the stove or tells you where you've put your keys. Dr. Mihailidis envisions a future where homes actually learn and adapt to the habits of their occupants. "Our goal is to create an intelligent home that allows people to age in place, giving them independence and reducing the burden on caregivers and the health care system", he says.

Right now, Dr. Mihailidis and his colleagues are working on a "prompting system" that uses artificial intelligence to monitor older adults with dementia as they wash their hands. Ultimately, it will also be used for other daily activities, such as dressing and cooking. "The system uses computer vision to track their movements and provides them with verbal prompts, when necessary, to ensure that they don't miss any steps along the way, such as using soap or turning off the taps", he explains.

During testing, the device proved remarkably effective. Older adults were able to complete about 25 % more of the steps involved in hand washing on their own, without a caregiver. In one case, the caregiver actually spent less than 30 seconds with the person – instead of the usual seven or eight minutes. The researchers are now refining and enhancing the system with visual prompts. They think some users will benefit from seeing video reminders on a screen.

In his busy office, Dr. Mihailidis and his colleagues are also developing a separate system to detect when someone falls at home. Using a ceiling-mounted camera, the computer vision system tracks a person's movements in their home. "If they do fall, the system automatically detects this and calls for help", says Dr. Mihailidis. "This means that even if they are unconscious or severely injured, they can still get help."

Working with Lifeline Systems Canada, a provider of personal response and support services, the researchers are now adding a feedback feature. "When a fall is detected, the system would ask the person: "Are you okay?" Based on their response or lack thereof, the system makes an intelligent decision as to what level of help is required."

Down the road, the device could also be used to monitor the amount of time a person spends sleeping, or the number of visits to the bathroom. It would alert a caregiver if the behaviour did not fit with typical patterns.

Dr. Mihailidis stresses that the cameras do not actually record anything. Hooked up to a computer, all they "see" is moving blobs or silhouettes.

Only a decade ago when Dr. Mihailidis started his Master's degree, many people thought artificial intelligence was too complicated to be applied to such real-world problems. "The computer power didn't really exist back then. Now, we can write stuff on a standard PC without any problems", observes Dr. Mihailidis. Something else has changed too, he says. There are now strong, collaborative connections between theoretical computer scientists, biomedical engineers and clinicians, he says.

Dr. Mihailidis believes his research can eventually help us all in our daily lives. "Right now, we're developing systems for people with moderate-to-severe dementia and for older adults, but in the future this type of technology will likely serve many people. It would be great if your house could say: "Your wallet's over there!" I often forget things and a reminder like that would be really, really helpful."

To find out more about the work being done at Toronto Rehab, visit their Web site at **www.torontorehab.com** .

Real-time Captioning on Galbraith's Webcasts

Galbraith Communications of Ottawa, a pioneer in webcasting, is now offering real-time captioning of live webcasts for participants who are deaf or hard of hearing. Live audio is converted to text by the on-site webcaster who types as close to verbatim as possible. "This is not only essential for people in the deaf community, it is a good idea for all participants, some of whom may be in their offices and therefore cannot turn up the volume. The real-time text transcript also becomes a written record of the proceedings," said Cory Galbraith, Director of Operations.

Webcasting of government meetings and workshops has doubled over the past 6 months, according to Galbraith Communications, as a way to cut costs while improving both accessibility and transparency. The webcast interface provides video, audio, text transcription and a live text chat so that the web audience can participate in events from the comfort and convenience of their home or office.

"We are disappointed that more government departments and non-profit organizations are not taking advantage of this inexpensive and proven technology in order to improve public access. But the industry is still new and many people are unaware of the advantages and ease of use. We have a big job to do in educating the public sector about the importance of webcasting to e-democracy," added Galbraith.

For more information, visit Galbraith Communications on the Web at: **www.galbraithcommunications.com** .

News Bits

In December, Catherine Fichten, who co-directs the Adaptech Research Network (**www.adaptech.org**), received the 2007 Canadian Psychological Association Award for Distinguished Contributions to Public or Community Service. This award recognizes individuals who, in the opinion of the Committee on Fellows and Awards and the Board of Directors of the association, have made outstanding contributions in serving the public or a community through their knowledge and practical skills. She was particularly noted for her many years of significant contributions to individuals with disabilities. In addition to her work with Adaptech, Catherine is a faculty member at both McGill University and Dawson college, she conducts sleep research and maintains a practice as a psychiatrist at the Jewish General Hospital in Montreal.

Also in December, the Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis (IMHA) launched a number of Requests for Applications/Funding. Information on all IMHA's Researcher Funding Opportunities can be found at: **www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/26667.html** .

On December 19, the World Wide Web Consortium (**www.w3.org**) issued a press release announcing the 10th anniversary of Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), the technology designers use to create attractive, economical, and flexible Web sites. "The design community has confirmed that using CSS promotes beauty while making it easier and less expensive to build sites," said Bert Bos, W3C Style Activity Lead and one of the original co-authors of the specification that became CSS level 1 (**www.w3.org/TR/CSS1**) published on 17 December 1996. To celebrate this anniversary, dubbed CSS10, W3C invites developers to propose their favorite CSS designs for the CSS10 Gallery (**www.w3.org/Style/CSS10/reactions.html**). Bert Bos and Håkon Lie, the other original co-author of CSS, will select designs for the gallery based on originality, utility, and aesthetics. W3C welcomes proposals until December 2007 and they expect to add to the gallery at least once monthly. Please send proposals to **css10@w3.org**.

On January 1, the Treasury Board released the new Common Look and Feel guidelines (CLF 2.0) for internet sites. All sites will need to comply with the new guidelines by December 31, 2008. For more information on CLF 2.0, visit the Treasury Board website at: **www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/clf-nsi/index_e.asp** which outlines the new guidelines and provides a comparison of CLF 1.0 and the new CLF 2.0.

The European Union has launched its Seventh Framework Program (FP7), a major funding initiative whose aim is the research and development of a wide variety of new and innovative products, systems and services. FP7 has allocated funding of 9.1 Billion Euros over a period of seven years (2007-2014) for Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) research, including a component on ICT for Independent Living and Inclusion of older adults and people with disabilities. International cooperation is sought with North America in the area of coordinating and developing future research agendas relating to Accessible and Inclusive ICT. To find out more, visit the FP7 website at: **http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home_en.html** .

The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) is in the process of updating its standard, CAN/CSA-B659-01 Design for Aging. This is in fulfilment of the CSA's requirement that standards be renewed at least every five years. Upon its completion, expected in the second half of 2008, the updated B659 will replace the current edition, which was published in 2001. Until it is replaced by the updated edition, the 2001 version has been reaffirmed by the CSA.

HumanWare Canada (**www.humanware.ca**) has been awarded $399,500 in repayable funding by Canada Economic Development. The funding, which the Drummondville, Quebec company will use for commercializing new products in North America and Europe, was announced in January by Jacques Gourde, MP for Lotbinière-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière on behalf of the Minister of Labour and Minister of Canada Economic Development, the Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn.

T-Base Communications has become the first alternate format company in North America to become PCI compliant. PCI is a standard of the Payment Card Industry and is used by credit card companies to protect cardholder account and transaction information. The standard is intended to increase security not only for the credit card company, but also for service providers and consumers by guarding against identity theft.

Effective February 1, Albert Ruel of Victoria, BC becomes the Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians' (AEBC) first National Equality Director. In a statement released to announce the appointment, AEBC President John Rae said, "I am looking forward to having someone on board who has Albert's depth of experience, as an important part of his work will be to bring new ideas, approaches and energy to the work of AEBC." To learn more about AEBC, call 1-800-561-4774 or visit their web site at: **www.BlindCanadians.ca** .

Check out the re-designed Madentec web site at **www.madentec.com** . The Edmonton-based company continues to develop and market a growing range of innovative computer access devices and now, with the new look to their web site, finding the computer solutions that work for you is even easier. You can search for products by product name, product category or by disability type which includes everything from ALS to Carpal Tunnel Syndrome to Spinal Cord Injury.

The Centre de recherche informatique de Montréal and Canadian and European Partners of the IST-EC 2 project (**www.ist-ec.org**) are proud to announce the first Canada-Europe eInclusion Symposium to take place on March 15, 2007. This inaugural summit will bring researchers from Europe and Canada together who are focused on e-Accessibility: the right of people with disabilities to benefit from the information society, a key focus of the global eInclusion thrust. In conjunction with the eInclusion Symposium, a FP7 Information Day will occur the following day, on March 16, which will enable researchers to network and learn all about ICTs, especially eInclusion as it relates to international cooperation in FP7.

Beverley Milligan, formerly of Media Access Canada (MAC) has moved to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, ADO at the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) as a Policy Advisor specializing in the area of accessible Information and Communication Standards. Replacing her as President and CEO of MAC is Christie Christelis. Beverley Milligan can be contacted at: MCSS Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, 777 Bay Street, 6th Floor Toronto, Ontario M7A 2J4 tel: 416-314-0913, email: **Beverley.milligan@ontario.ca** . Christie Christelis can be contacted at: President, Media Access Canada #610 - 115 George St. Oakville, ON L6J 0A2 tel: 416-339-0109 fax: 416-339-3079.

Curo Interactive Inc. has developed unique accessibility mobile user interface technologies (UI) that simplify the operation of mobile phones in revolutionary ways. Curo usability solutions are integrated into mobile phones and the user operates the phone with a dedicated Curo "Quick Access One Button". The accessibility mobile phone platform has various models specific to people who are visually impaired, or who have cognitive or mental disabilities and easy one button operation with specially designed options for people who have physical disabilities. A Beta user interface product demo is available for evaluation. Curo is proposing to Bell Canada's Accessibility department to promote an "accessibility mobile phone" launch to ensure that people of all walks of life, age and ability can enjoy using their mobile phones. For more information about Curo Interactive, please visit **www.curointeractive.com** .

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **www.at-links.gc.ca**. At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Mary Frances Laughton or Deb Finn
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4316 or 613-990-4297
fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
email: **adio@crc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Industry Canada Industrie Canada

Government Publications

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

Spring 2007

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 30

LIBRARY
JUL 20 2007
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Upcoming Canadian Conferences

June will see Canada front and centre on the world stage, with two major international conferences/exhibitions.

From June 15-20, the Festival of International Conferences on Caregiving, Disability, Aging and Technology takes place at the Sheraton Centre in Toronto. Visit **www.ficcdat.ca** to find out more. Industry Canada will be represented in the Service Canada booth. Come by and say hello.

From June 18-22, the 11th International Conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled Persons (TRANSED) will take place at the Palais des congrès in Montreal. More information on this event can be found at: **www.tc.gc.ca/transed2007/** .

CSUN Wrap-up

The 22nd Technology & Disability Conference (CSUN: **www.csun.edu/cod/**) drew more than 3,500 participants and 175 exhibitors over its four-day run next to the Los Angeles Airport. Once again, there was a very visible contingent of Canadians exhibiting, presenting and attending the show. The Industry Canada booth was staffed by Mary Frances Laughton, Deb Finn and Chuck Letourneau. There were a number of other Canadian government personnel who stopped by with offers of assistance during the run of the show.

There was significant controversy during the show about CSUN's plans for the exhibits next year. The show has simply outgrown its current location and the University considered using a tentlike structure for next year's exhibit. Concern about this move brought the industry together and ADIO staff met with various members of the ATIA (Assistive Technology Industry Association) to offer our support to them. In May, it was announced that a solution had been found and the exhibits will be moved to another Airport-area hotel, the Marriott Renaissance Montura Hotel, which was the site for the new category of presentations that was added to the Conference this year, dealing with aging and older adults.

Visitors to the Industry Canada booth (#336) were steady throughout the conference and interest in Canadian assistive technology, products, systems and services and in Canada as a country remains high and enthusiastic. We provided a listing of the 13

Canadian booths on the showfloor, the number of which surprised many visitors. One of our most important tasks is pointing attendees to the booths of our Canadian partners at the show.

We demonstrated the Accessible Procurement Toolkit (**www.apt.gc.ca**) and showcased product literature from over 30 of our industry partners, many returning and some first-timers. We were able to provide specific information on some products to booth visitors or sometimes we simply handed out a kit of information.

By having a place to meet, Industry Canada provides a focus for doing business for Canadians. The large Canadian flag and our distinctive red and white draperies make us easy to spot in the exhibit hall and we are always happy to have our industry representatives make use of our location in support of their business networking activities. Two companies used us this year as their "office" for the show and both are speaking about having their own presence at next year's exhibit.

The keynote speaker was John D. Kemp, a lawyer who was born without arms or legs. In his address, he made an impassioned plea to ensure people with disabilities are not left behind the rest of society by the digital divide that currently persists. He noted that in industrialized countries, there is much that still needs to be done to reduce the barriers that exist for people with disabilities and even more that needs to be done to ensure the rights of people with disabilities everywhere are respected. Far from preaching to the choir, Mr. Kemp's address included some pragmatic suggestions for improving and maintaining high levels of accessibility.

Our Canadian flag pins continue to be a popular give away. Nearly everyone has a positive story to relate about Canada when they come by the booth.

As part of our work in LA, we provided information on the standards and business aspects of importing accessible cell phones into Canada, discussed the ability of Canada and the US to better share electronic information materials through improved copyright permissions, provided information on employment in the disability field in Canada and provided information on the accessibility aspects of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games. We answered questions on business and tourism opportunities in Canada. We also answered questions on possibilities of investing in Canada and companies looking for distributors for their products in Canada.

We came away with over 30 business cards, each of which has an action item on the back. Some want more information on investing. Some want to be remembered to friends not present this year. A number of visitors to our booth told us that they were familiar with our newsletter, Accessible News, as it had been passed along to them by colleagues and they asked to be added to our distribution list.

We also had enquiries about some of the products and systems that were developed by companies that have gone out of business. Even though these companies have left the market for various reasons, the accessible technologies they developed continue to enhance Canada's reputation for leading-edge AT development.

CSUN is often used as an event to announce or launch new products and this year was no exception. Compusult Limited (**www.compusult.net**) and the Neil Squire Society (NSS: **www.neilsquire.ca**) announced that Compusult will manufacture the Hands-free Adapters (HFA) product line developed by the NSS Research and Development group in collaboration with Nokia Inc's Accessibility Group. The HFA will make wireless communication accessible to people with severe mobility and dexterity impairments. Compusult and NSS collaborated previously on commercialization of the Jouse and Jouse2 alternate input device.

Clearly, Canadian companies are developing products and systems that international industrial partners recognize as must-haves to integrate with their own technology!

News From T-Base

Ottawa's T-Base Communications (**www.tbase.com**) has been busy this spring. In April, the company announced the request for nominations of blind and partially sighted athletes for the 2007/2008 T-Base Sponsorship. This annual sponsorship is awarded to a blind or partially sighted athlete dedicated to a competitive sport who exemplifies the drive for success and commitment in his/her athletic endeavours. Deaf blind speed skater Kevin Frost was the recipient of last year's sponsorship, supporting his ambition to become Canada's first Paralympic speed skating competitor and gold medallist.

In order to submit a nomination, please send emails to **dwhite@tbase.com** on or before July 31, 2007, including the name of the athlete in the email message subject line and an explanation (40 lines or less) outlining the goals and ambitions of the nominee, plus the location, if any, of additional information on which your nomination is based (i.e. Website, articles, etc.) T-Base sponsorship eligibility is limited to North American residents. For further information please contact: Deanna White, T-Base Communications Media Relations, tel.: 613-236-0866 Ext. 231, toll-free: 1-800-563-0668, email: **dwhite@tbase.com** .

In May, T-Base announced a strategic alliance with an American electronic commerce and payments company, First Data Resources (**www.firstdata.com**), to provide specialized statement services to First Data's clients for their customers who are unable to access their financial information in conventional print. This new partnership ensures that all of First Data's clients are in a position to offer their blind

or partially sighted customers full access to their private financial statements in the format of their choice, including Braille and large print.

First Data expects to make the service available in the third quarter of 2007. Issuers and billers who do not process their portfolio with First Data will also be able to use the service.

Also in May, T-Base announced an exclusive, long-term partnership agreement enabling Australians and New Zealanders who are blind or who have low vision to access their financial, telecom and utility statements, and other private and personal information in Braille, large print, e-text and audio formats. Under the terms of the agreement, T-Base will work in partnership with Vision Australia to develop and deliver accessible products to meet the diverse information needs of their clients.

"Vision Australia is pleased to announce the selection of T-Base, the North American leader in the provision of accessible statements and private consumer communications," said Gerard Menses, CEO of Vision Australia. "T-Base adheres to the highest standards of privacy, security, quality and accuracy around sensitive consumer information, ensuring that the sensitive personal information of Australia's blind and low vision community is afforded the same protection as for the fully sighted population."

Sharlyn Ayotte, President and CEO of T-Base Communications stated, "With the announcement of this important relationship, we demonstrate the flexibility and reach of the T-Base AccessAbill solution. Vision Australia is a pioneer in the provision of accessible services, and is now poised to offer their clients T-Base Communications' best-in-class AccessAbill service, and help leading financial services companies, telecom service providers and utilities in Australia to better serve their customers who are blind or have low vision".

For media inquiries regarding the Vision Australia announcement, contact Deanna White, Media and Partner Relations, T-Base Communications, tel.: 613- 236-0866 Ext. 231, email: **dwhite@tbase.com** or Megan Denyer, Public Relations Officer, Vision Australia, tel.: +61 2 9334 3308, email: **megan.denyer@visionaustralia.org**

First Call for Papers for ISAAC Conference

You are invited to submit a paper to the 13th Biennial Conference of the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC), which will be held next year in Montreal, August 2-7, 2008. The conference theme is Leadership. Individuals who use AAC for their daily communication have increasingly taken on leadership roles in many different ways. Examples of leadership will be showcased as part of the 2008 conference program and since 2008

is the 25th anniversary of ISAAC, the Society will be celebrating the history of ISAAC and AAC, which has changed enormously and will continue to evolve in the future.

Proposals will be selected based on quality, content area, significance, and program balance. Only unpublished papers may be presented, and the program must not be used by individuals to take orders for or sell products or materials. All program presenters are expected to follow accepted procedures to protect human subjects. ISAAC will own the copyright of all proposals accepted for the conference. The short abstracts will be published in the Conference Final Program, and the extended abstracts will be published in the Conference Proceedings. Both will be provided to all Main Conference registrants at no cost during the event.

Deadline for submissions is October 1, 2007. The main language of the conference is English. Some sessions will be offered in French. Submissions will be accepted in English or French. Paper proposals must be submitted electronically. To submit a proposal, please go to **www.isaac2008.org** .

The 2008 Conference will include the following formats: 70 minute oral presentation, 30 minute oral presentation, or poster presentation. Paper types will include personal experience, clinical or educational paper, or research paper.

For more information, please contact the Conference Co-chairs, Ann Sutton and Jeff Riley, at: ISAAC 2008 Conference Secretariat - JPdL, 1555 Peel, Suite 500, Montreal, Quebec H3A 3L8, tel: 514-287-1070, fax: 514-287-1248, email: **isaac2008@jpdl.com** or URL: **www.isaac2008.org** .

CHRC Launches A Guide for Managing the Return to Work

Absences due to disability or illness are among the most challenging human resource situations facing employers today. Indeed statistics show that costs generated by disability and income programs are steadily rising, as are productivity losses. The National Institute of Disability Management and Research estimates that at any given time, 8 to 12% of Canada's workforce is absent due to illness or injury.

Several factors are contributing to Canada's growing rates of prolonged employee absenteeism, including stress related to technological change and organizational restructuring, an aging workforce that is more susceptible to long-term illness, and difficulties balancing work and family responsibilities.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) receives many complaints based on disputes regarding the transition back to work after a prolonged employee absence. The Commission is committed to helping employers manage these cases so

that the employee can return to work safely, quickly and efficiently. That's why it has developed this booklet of guidelines, A Guide for Managing the Return to Work, to support managers and supervisors in handling return-to-work situations. You can find the Guide on the Web at:
www.chrc-ccdp.ca/publications/gmrw_ggrt/toc_tdm-en.asp?lang_update=1 .

Telecommunications and Electronic and Information Technology Advisory Committee (TEITAC)

TEITAC had its third meeting May 22-24 in Washington DC. Mary Frances Laughton of ADIO sits on this committee as one of four international representatives. The committee is in the final stages of recommending changes to the regulations for Section 508 of the US Rehabilitation Act and Section 255 of the US Telecommunications Act. These recommendations will go the US Access Board.

The Committee works through sub-committees on which a number of Canadians serve. Regular teleconferences for each of these sub-groups are open to all. These sub-groups are examining each clause in the existing regs to see if they should stay as is, change or be deleted. The goal is to have a set of regulations that are technologically neutral and will last for at least five years.

An Editorial Working Group is taking all the sub-group input and drafting a new set of regulations that will serve both Acts. A message will be sent to Canadian industry in early July to alert them that the recs are ready for comment.

The next TEITAC meeting is scheduled for July 16-18. At that meeting, a decision will be taken as to whether the final report will be delivered to the Access Board in September or November. This decision will be based on the amount of consensus arising from the early July draft of the regs.

Harmonization of standards is one the key elements of the work of TEITAC. Many of the people involved also sit on the JTC1-Special Working Group on Accessibility. Please see **http://TEITAC.ORG** for information on the work of the committee.

WCAG 2.0

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Working Group (WCAG WG) invites you to comment on an updated draft of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG 2.0), published on 17 May 2007. WCAG 2.0 addresses accessibility of Web content for people with disabilities. The updated WCAG 2.0 Public Working Draft incorporates changes in response to comments received on the 27 April 2006 WCAG 2.0 Last Call Working Draft.

Because there were a number of substantive changes, WCAG 2.0 has returned to Public Working Draft status and expects to advance WCAG 2.0 to a second Last Call Working Draft after this Public Working Draft. W3C/WAI encourages you to review this document and submit comments on any issues which you feel could present a barrier to adoption and implementation of WCAG 2.0. Comments on this Working Draft are due by 29 June 2007.

The Working Group requests that comments be made using the online or downloadable comment form available at **http://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG20/comments/** . If this is not possible, comments can also be sent to **public-comments-wcag20@w3.org** .

News Bits

The Resolutions from the 23-27 April 2007 meeting of the JTC-1 Special Working Group on Accessibility (SWG-A) held in Hamar, Norway are available at **www.jtc1access.org/documents.htm** as Document SWG-A N 263. Also available at this site are the other documents which have been created during the three years of the Special Working Group. This includes the User Needs Summary and the Inventory of Accessibility Standards. One of the projects underway for the SWG-A being led by Mary Frances Laughton, is found in documents 255 and 256. Any inputs would be gratefully received at **laughton@crc.ca** .

In April, it was announced that a special issue of "The Information Society" would be published on accessible and inclusive technology and would be edited and feature articles by members/colleagues of the Disability and Information Technologies (Dis-IT) Research Alliance. The guest editors of this special issue are Gary Annable (Dis-IT), Deborah Stienstra (University of Manitoba), and Gerard Goggin (University of Sydney). The six articles are: "A Three-Way Dance: The Global Public Good and Accessibility in Information Technologies" by Deborah Stienstra, James Watzke, and Gary Birch; "The Business of Digital Disability" by Gerard Goggin and Christopher Newell; "Engaging the Business/Industrial Sector in Accessibility Research: Lessons in Bridge Building" by Aldred H. Neufeldt, James Watzke, Gary Birch, and Denise Buchner; "Accessibility and Product Ecologies" by Jim Tobias; "Crossing the Digital Divide: Possibilities for Influencing the Private Sector Business Case" by Helen Maskery; and "Working for Barrier Removal in the ICT Area: Creating a More Accessible and Inclusive Canada" by April D'Aubin. The Information Society is available in print and on-line formats available to most university faculty, students, and staff. Dis-IT will also be able to provide the articles in various formats. Abstracts/summaries of each article are available at: **www.indiana.edu/~tisj/inpress/index.html** .

Dr. Morris (Mickey) Milner is the recipient of the Canadian Standards Association's 2007 John Jenkins Award. The Award is CSA's most prestigious honour, bestowed upon the person who is judged to have rendered distinguished service in the development, advancement, and application of voluntary standards. In addition to his many years of working with the CSA, including the Chairmanship of the Strategic Steering Committee on Community Health and Safety, Dr. Milner is the President and CEO of htx.ca - The Health Technology Exchange and is also a Professor Emeritus at University of Toronto. The John Jenkins Award will be presented to Dr. Milner at the CSA's Annual Conference, which takes place from June 10-15 in Halifax.

The Canadian Standards Association has published a new national standard to provide guidance on how to make the components of a wide range of electronic, electro-mechanical and mechanical devices more accessible and easier to use. CAN/CSA B651.2-07 "Accessible design for self-service interactive devices" can be applied to devices as diverse as vending machines, pay and display machines in parking lots, point of sale terminals and check-in kiosks at airports. To find out more about this standard or to purchase it, visit the CSA's Online Store, which can be found through **www.csa.ca** .

The Canadian Alliance for Animal-Assisted Services (CAFAAS) has announced its agenda for next year's Animal-Assisted Services Bridge Builders Initiative, which will take place at the North Grenville Municipal Centre in North Grenville, Ontario from April 25-27, 2008. To find out more about this or about CAFAAS, please contact Joanne Moss, President, CAFAAS, P.O. Box 279 Winchester, Ontario K0C 2K0, tel.: 613-774-0001, email: **cafaas@cyberus.ca** .

US-based Assistive Technology News has announced the launch of a new Web site called ATechNews.com (**www.atechnews.com**) to help the 56 million Americans with disabilities stay abreast of assistive technology products. The site promises to include everything from new product announcements to advocate profiles, product evaluations and interviews with leaders in the public and private sectors working on disability issues.

On May 17, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC: **www.crtc.gc.ca**) set out a new policy with respect to closed captioning that applies to all television licensees. Under the policy set out in Broadcasting Public Notice CRTC 2007-54, English- and French-language broadcasters will be required to caption 100% of their programs over the broadcast day, with the exception of advertising and promos. In light of the specific challenges associations with the captioning of French-language programming, the Commission is prepared to consider requests to tailor the 100% requirement, with the onus on broadcasters to demonstrate that it is impossible to meet the 100% captioning requirement. To address concerns over the current quality of captioning, the Commission has also

called on the broadcasting industry to establish working groups for the development and implementation of measures to improve the quality of captioning in Canada, including the development of universal standards in English and French. The Commission has not, however, established any timetable for either the establishment of these captioning standards or for the implementation of the 100% captioned broadcast day.

US-based Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic (RFB&D: **www.rfbd.org**) and HumanWare (**www.humanware.com**) have announced that the HumanWare family of BrailleNote mPower, PK and Maestro accessible PDAs will have the ability to play AudioPlus recorded books from RFB&D as of early June 2007. HumanWare Canada has long been a supplier of the Victor Reader Family of digital audio book players to RFB&D's members, all of whom have print disabilities. When played on the HumanWare Victor Reader digital players, AudioPlus recorded books can be navigated much like a print book, allowing the reader to move from chapter to chapter, section to section or jump directly to any page.

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **www.at-links.gc.ca**. At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us



For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Mary Frances Laughton or Deb Finn
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4316 or 613-990-4297
fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
email: **adio@crc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Industry Canada Industrie Canada
Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)
Summer 2007

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 31

Festival of International Conferences on Caregiving, Disability, Aging and Technology (FICCDAT)
- by Mary Frances Laughton

After four years of planning, it is over! I was the chair of Logistics and Accessibility for this conference and have been attending planning meetings and putting access into the planning for all of them.

This was the first Canadian conference to deal with aging, with disability, with technology and with caregiving. It ran from June 15-19 at the Toronto Sheraton Centre.

Over 1200 delegates from 32 countries attended five conferences and one special symposium and all were equally successful events. The special events themselves were a sensation; a tribute to the culture of Canada at the opening and a tribute to the talents of people with disabilities at the banquet.

Here are some of the findings:

Technology is only relevant if used by people so needs to be designed in a way that matches their lifestyle, accommodation, capacity, as well as cultural and personal perspectives.

Caregiving is a role not well regarded or rewarded and therefore in some countries and in some circumstances, not well provided. It is also one that denigrates not elevates women, and in a fast changing culture, those needing care are often shunned or disregarded, especially if they are women.

"Neuroplasticity" holds open many doors for future scientific breakthroughs, new programs, new solutions for damaged neuropathways.

Keeping our aged at home requires that their homes be safe, accessible, flexible for independence, so modifications must become more easily obtainable. Visitability is a concept growing in currency and legislative arenas, thus providing for more access and integration of people with special needs.

One major overall goal is to further development in aging with a disability by building a shared research and policy agenda. Promising signs are evident in crossing network lines and establishing a common vocabulary such as "accessability" and "consumer-choice".

The advances that are beginning to emerge through the integration of technology and rehabilitation appear to be limited only by imagination and ingenuity.

With five conferences concurrently happening in up to 33 rooms, it was nice to have something constant to look forward to. The Exhibition featured 86 exhibitors that were as diverse as the delegates from medical/assistive device manufacturers and distributors, research teams, University-associated organizations, not-for-profit organizations, caregiver associations, two government agencies and more.

FICCDAT held a symposium sponsored by the Institute on Aging of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and co-presented with The Strategic Promotion of Ageing Research Capacity (SPARC), UK. Linda Mealing of IA and Peter Lansley of SPARC gave overviews of current aging research and priorities for their respective organizations.

Information on the conference results can be found at **www.ficcdat.ca** .

TRANSED 2007: A Success!

Canada is proud to have hosted the 11th International Conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled Persons (TRANSED: **www.tc.gc.ca/transed2007/**), held June 18-22, 2007, at the Palais des congrès de Montréal under the theme "Benchmarking, Evaluation and Vision for the Future".

The Conference highlighted advances in research, profiled international breakthroughs and explored perspectives for technological innovations related to the mobility challenges of an aging population and of persons with disabilities, as part of an inclusive society. The Conference also featured an exhibition where participants were given an overview of the deployment of innovation in the field of accessible transportation, a dynamic poster session, and technical tours of local facilities.

The scale and scope of TRANSED 2007 was extraordinary, with upwards of 600 registrants from about 40 countries in attendance and the largest participation to date of people with disabilities. Over 30 exhibitors were on hand to present their services and innovations, while delegates submitted a record number of poster presentations and abstracts. All of the papers submitted for TRANSED 2007 are available for viewing on the Program page: **www.tc.gc.ca/pol/en/Transed2007/program.htm** .

Congratulations to all the award winners recipients for their hard work and invaluable research into accessible transportation: because of you, we are closer than ever to living in a barrier-free world. A special mention goes out to Ann Frye (UK), recipient of the 2007 William G. Bell Award for her lifelong commitment to promoting accessibility.

The other prize winners were:

Best Paper Award - Benchmarking
Maryvonne Dejeammes (France)

Best Paper Award - Evaluation
Anders Wretstrand (Sweden)

Best Paper Award - Vision for the Future
Franck Bodin (France)

Best Poster Award
Craig Childs (United Kingdom)

Best Exhibitor Award
BKD Aerospace Industries Inc. (Canada)

Eight TRANSED 2007 Travel Awards were provided to recipients from around the world. The selection criteria for the Travel Awards were based primarily on the quality of abstracts submitted for presentation at TRANSED 2007.

Sponsors for the TRANSED 2007 Travel Awards include, Transport Canada, Air Canada, Via Rail Canada Inc. and The Agence métropolitaine de transport.

Congratulations to the following recipients:

Ankush Garg (India)
Jose Antonio Isola (Peru)
Anjlee Agarwal (India)
Sanjeev Sachdeva (India)
Angela Costa Werneck de Carvalho (Brazil)
Gustavo Martinez (Colombia)
John Rae (Canada)
Charlotta Ryd (Sweden)

See you at TRANSED 2010 in Hong Kong (**www.transed2010.hk/**)!

News From the Canadian Transportation Agency

On June 18, 2007, the Canadian Transportation Agency (Agency) released two new products aimed at improving the accessibility of air, rail and marine terminals at TRANSED in Montreal.

- The Code of Practice : Passenger Terminal Accessibility (Terminal Code); and

- The Guide to Passenger Terminal Accessibility (Terminal Guide).

The Terminal Code covers a broad range of terminals including small ferry terminals in Atlantic Canada, rural and urban train stations of varying sizes and Canada's airports within the National Airports System. In addition to providing the technical specifications for the physical aspects of terminals, the Code covers other issues such as ground transportation, boarding devices, escort passes, passenger assistance and facility and service awareness programs. Representing minimum accessibility standards these terminals are expected to meet, the Code offers practical solutions to the industry to solve systemic problems faced by persons with disabilities when they travel through terminals.

The companion document, the Terminal Guide, was created as a reference tool to assist passenger terminal operators in implementing the provisions of the new Terminal Code, and to make their facilities more accessible to travellers with disabilities. It includes practical information such as resources and tips.

To obtain a copy of the Terminal Code and the Guide call 1-888-222-2592 (TTY:1-800-669-5575) or visit the Agency's Web site at **www.cta.gc.ca** . These publications are also available in multiple formats upon request.

Creation of the Commissioner for Complaints for Telecommunications Services to Benefit Consumers

On July 24, the then-Minister of Industry (now Minister of Foreign Affairs), the Honourable Maxime Bernier, applauded the news of the launch of the Commissioner for Complaints for Telecommunications Services (CCTS). The Government of Canada called on the telecommunications industry last April to work with the CRTC to establish an independent telecommunications consumer agency, as part of the federal
government's deregulation of local telephone services.

"Canada's New Government believes that an independent agency with a mandate to resolve complaints from individuals and small business retail customers is an integral component of a deregulated telecommunications market," said Minister

Bernier. "We continue to believe that reliance on market forces and competition benefits both Canadian businesses and consumers."

The Telecommunications Policy Review Panel, in its 2006 report, recommended the creation of such a telecommunications consumer agency, noting that it would protect the interests of Canadian consumers in a world where "telecommunications services are becoming more pervasive and increasingly complex for consumers."

For more information, please contact:

Media Relations
Industry Canada
613-943-2502

CAD to Pioneer Real-Time Interpretation Services

On July 6, the Canadian Association of the Deaf (CAD) announced that it has received funding to pioneer an important new initiative designed to make it possible for members of the Deaf community who use sign language to communicate effectively in face to face situations with those who do not, without having a sign language interpreter accompany them to the meeting. CAD will establish a national call-centre service, delivering sign language interpretation via the Internet to allow Deaf Canadians to communicate in situations like banking, voting, or buying something in a store with remote access to interpreters on demand.

Funded by a grant from Industry Canada's Office for Consumer Affairs and with additional support from CAD's partners, the Visible Languages Translation Initiative (VLTI) system will be placed in a variety of locations including banks, shopping centres, or government offices. The system will connect users to interpreters working in a call-centre setting who could facilitate communication with others who might not be able to communicate in sign language. In addition to providing American Sign Language (ASL) and Langues des Signes Québecois (LSQ) remotely, the video consoles will also be equipped to display text.

The project will be managed by Rick Sinclair, senior consultant from Sinclair Nicholson and Associates based in Ottawa. He commented, "The VLTI project is coming in at a crucial time. With the Access for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) being implemented, over 800,000 businesses and organizations in Ontario will be required to make at least some changes to accommodate persons with a disability. Many in the private sector are also realizing that it presents an opportunity for an increase of 10%-15% in market share, by addressing consumers who have not been accommodated well in the past. The minute we mention it, we are seeing instant interest."

The Canadian Association of the Deaf is actively looking for corporate partners to help realizing this important pioneering initiative.

For more information, please contact:

Rick Sinclair, Manager, VLTI Project
email: **rick@snaconsulting.ca**
TTY: 613-565-8882
Voice: 613-565-2882
Fax: 613-565-1207

Technology Grant Improves Quality of Life for People with Disabilities

The Province of British Columbia is funding a $750,000 one-time grant to the University of Victoria's CanAssist team to build individualized technology for persons with disabilities. The grant was announced by B.C.'s Employment and Income Assistance Minister Claude Richmond on July 16. More than 570,000 British Columbians (13.4 per cent of the population) have disabilities. Minister Richmond stated that through partnerships with community-based organizations, such as UVic's CanAssist, the province can ensure these people have the support they need to lead productive lives at home, at work and in the community.

The grant will increase CanAssist's ability to design and provide more specialized projects and equipment to persons with special needs and help recruit more volunteers. The grant will also bolster a number of key projects and research areas that include communication and control, mobility and motion, human-computer interaction and online learning and community building. CanAssist is an initiative that combines innovative research and development, the integration of research and teaching, and the translation of knowledge for the benefit of the communities it serves. Projects include tricycles and bicycles for children with physical and visual disabilities, high-tech wheelchair modifications and eye-tracking communication systems. To create these devices, CanAssist draws on the expertise of people ranging from engineers, music and kinesiology students to retired seamstresses.

To enhance access to the many programs, supports and devices available to British Columbians with disabilities, the B.C. government recently launched the toll-free Personal Supports Information Line. Callers can talk to call agents and have their specific questions answered by calling 1 888 818-1211. For people who use TTYs, the number is 1 800 661-8773.

Upcoming Conferences in Canada

Here's what's happening in Canada between October 1 and December 31. Please note that the language in each of the following entries is the language in which the conference was submitted to the conference list:

October 1-4, 2007
WALK21 Toronto - Putting Pedestrians First
Toronto, Ontario, CANADA
E-mail: walk21@toronto.ca
WWW: www.toronto.ca/walk21

October 17-19, 2007
On the Way to Success V
Edmonton, Alberta, CANADA
Contact: Alberta Society for the Visually Impaired
Tel: (780) 453-8345
E-mail: info@asviedmonton.org

October 18-20, 2007
7th National Guide & Assistance Dog Conference
Vancouver-Burnaby, BC, CANADA
Contact: Rosamund van Leeuwen
Tel: 604-922-9339
E-mail: rosamund@electriceye.ca

October 25-26, 2007
CNIB Braille Conference 2007
Toronto, Ontario, CANADA
Tel: 416-486-2500 x7530
E-mail: **brailleconference@cnib.ca**
URL: **www.cnib.ca/en/events/braille-conference-2007/default.aspx**

For more conference listings, including what's coming up in other countries, see the "Conference Listings in Assistive Devices" link on the ADIO Web site: **www.at-links.gc.ca/as/as001E.asp** . This is also the link you should use to submit your conferences (Canadian or international) for inclusion in the listings.

News Bits

GAATES (Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies & Environments: **www.gaates.org**), organised by Betty Dion, President of GAATES, Ottawa, held a members' reunion at TRANSED 2007. The meeting took place on Monday, June 18 at the Palais des congres, Montreal. Members who attended from around the world discussed their work on accessibility of the built and virtual environments, including their guidelines for UNESCO on community multimedia centres and the International Best Practices in Universal Design, which is now available in French, English, Spanish, Arabic and will soon be available in Serbian. The English and French versions are also available in alternate format.

On July 24, The CRTC approved the National Broadcast Reading Service's (NBRS: **www.nbrscanada.com**) application for a broadcasting licence to operate a national, English-language digital specialty described video programming undertaking to be known as The Accessible Channel. Broadcast Decision CRTC 2007-246 allows The Accessible Channel to be included as part of digital basic cable across the country. The new channel will offer a 24-hour, 100% open format described video service providing news, information, drama, entertainment and other programming to blind and visually impaired Canadians.

On August 17, Ottawa's T-Base Communications (**www.tbase.com**) announced that Jason Dunkerley, a blind competitive runner, has been selected for the T-Base 2007/2008 athletic sponsorship program. Each year, T-Base sponsors a new blind athlete who exemplifies the drive for success in his/her field by providing alternate format communication materials. Jason navigates the track through directional and verbal cues from a sighted guide who runs closely beside him. As a part of the sponsorship, Jason will receive all of his communication materials in an accessible format such as braille-embossed business cards and alternate format presentation notes for speaking engagements. "It's wonderful to have such strong support from organizations such as T-Base," says Dunkerley.

Also in August, ARCH Disability Law Centre announced the release of a report entitled "Assistive Devices in Canada: Ensuring Inclusion and Independence". The report provides essential information to persons with disabilities about the rules that govern the safety, availability, reliability and cost of assistive devices in Canada. The report also provides suggestions for policy reform that are responsive to the concerns of persons with disabilities. The executive summary and full report are available in English on ARCH's website at **www.archdisabilitylaw.ca** . Please email Theresa Sciberras, Program Assistant at **scibert@lao.on.ca** if you would like to receive the document in an alternate format.

Madentec Limited (**www.madentec.com**) of Edmonton have a number of new products and product updates available. The company's new Envoy Create software for the Macintosh is designed to work with the Discover Envoy software (best described as keyboard and mouse replacement software for users who cannot operate a standard keyboard and mouse.) With Envoy create, virtual on-screen keyboards with custom key arrangements (or "set-ups") may now be created from scratch for the "point-and-click" user as well as the "switch scanning" user. Pointing set-ups may be accessed by an alternative pointing device, such as the TrackerPro, by simply pointing and clicking on the target button or key in the 'set-up'. The company has also updated its Magic Cursor for the PC with new features that include new on-screen icons, improved jitter sensitivity, custom timers, and optional transparency. All of Madentec's software products (ScreenDoors, Magic Cursor, Telepathic and DiscoverPro) are now compatible with computers running Windows Vista. Last but not least, a new version of Madentec's copy-protection for all updated software (version 2.3) now gives customers the ability to install software and enter the code provided when they purchase a new or updated product without having to contact the company for an "unlock code". Registering or transferring your software license has never been easier.

Kanata, Ontario's NetCentric Technologies (**www.net-centric.com**) has recently been awarded a contract by the Ontario Ministry of Finance to provide a revolutionary new solution called "Accessibility on Demand". Many governmental, educational and private-sector organizations have a stated objective to make their electronic information comply with accessibility standards. In many cases, these organizations are surprised and discouraged by the cost involved in achieving compliance and in many cases, legacy documents published on websites may no longer be in demand. The cost involved in making these documents compliant with legislative requirements cannot always be easily justified. Accessibility on Demand (AOD) is a new solution being offered to the accessibility marketplace for PDF content. AOD allows those organizations responsible to provide accessibility to electronic documentation with the ability to match cost and delivery with market demand. For more information contact Andrew Oestreich at **aoestreich@net-centric.com** or call 613 270 9582 Ext 204.

Two regulations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation, O. Reg. 429/07, and the Exemption from Reporting Requirements Regulation, O. Reg. 430/07 have been approved by Cabinet and have been filed. The former contains specific requirements with respect to providing accessible customer services in Ontario. The latter has been enacted in order to minimize regulatory burden for smaller obligated organizations by exempting those with fewer than 20 employees (other than designated public sector organizations) from the statutory requirement to submit compliance reports in this first phase of implementation. The text of both regulations is now available to the public on the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services Web site at: **www.mcss.gov.on.ca/mcss/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario** . They come into force on January 1, 2008.

The Disability-Related Policy in Canada website (**www.disabilitypolicy.ca**) has been updated to reflect the recommendations from an evaluation that took place last summer. The website was evaluated by 40 online users with disabilities as well as by 13 key informants from government and disability organizations. Some of the notable changes are: new colour scheme; addition of a Google search facility; stamps at the bottom of the home page indicating the site has passed two online accessibility tests (AChecker and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0); removal of interactive forums (the website is more of a resource); all bad links either updated or removed; addition of table of contents for each resource page, making them easier to navigate; and new tab for the resource section on a Federal Disability Act.

"Just Ask: Integrating Accessibility Throughout Design" is a new book that helps designers and developers include accessibility in their websites, software, hardware, and consumer products. It focuses on including real people with disabilities throughout the design process, to develop effective accessibility solutions efficiently. "Just Ask" is available in conventional and large print versions, and the entire book is also online free at: **www.uiAccess.com/JustAsk/**.

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **www.at-links.gc.ca**. At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Mary Frances Laughton or Deb Finn
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4316 or 613-990-4297
fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
email: **adio@crc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Industry Canada Industrie Canada

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

Fall 2007

Government Publication

JAN 10 2008

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 32

Accessible Procurement Toolkit's New Look

The look and feel of the Assistive Devices Industry Office's Accessible Procurement Toolkit (APT: **www.apt.gc.ca**) has been significantly improved after adopting the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's CLF 2.0 standards and design templates (**www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/clf-nsi/**). This upgrade offers substantial benefits to users of assistive technologies. As well it extends the application's functionality to a wider selection of mainstream Web browsers. We have also significantly improved the ability to search for and list content using our updated Search forms (**www.apt.gc.ca/SearchE.asp**).

Please note that these changes mean some pages have been removed or renamed: if you encounter a "page not found" error when using a link you previously bookmarked, go to our home page and follow the active links or use the Search form to find the information's new location.

We continually look for ways to improve the Toolkit: if you have any comments or suggestions, we would love to hear from you.

$3 Million for Library and Archives Canada's Initiative for Equitable Library Access

On October 2, the Honourable Josée Verner, Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages, announced funding for Library and Archives Canada (LAC) to support access by Canadians with print disabilities to library collections. Funding of $3 million will support the Initiative for Equitable Library Access (IELA) to assist Canadians who are unable to read standard printed material.

"Through this initiative, Canada's New Government will encourage the full participation of all Canadians in today's highly competitive knowledge economy," said Minister Verner. "Less than five percent of published materials are currently available in multiple formats. This project will help raise this percentage."

IELA will coordinate activities, develop a national strategy and assess the costs involved, and provide equitable library services. The initiative will be carried out in partnership with Canadian libraries, people with print disabilities, publishers, producers of multiple formats, and other stakeholders, including the CNIB and the education sector. With the cooperation it is receiving nationwide, the Government of Canada will be able to offer equitable library services to meet the information needs of people with visual, perceptual, and physical disabilities.

"Canada's library community has asked us to take the lead as a national, coordinating body to ensure that all Canadians have consistent library access to information wherever they live and whatever their means" said Ian Wilson, Librarian and Archivist of Canada. "I am delighted to respond with an initiative that will allow many more Canadians to take advantage of information resources by providing it in a format they can use."

Mary Frances Laughton has been named interim Manager of IELA. She will be at Library and Archives Canada three days a week and can be reached at 819-934-5823.

Listen to the GGs!

On November 21, the CNIB Library and Simply Audiobooks unveiled the first-ever collection of winners of the Governor General's Literary Awards in audio format and hoping to draw the Canadian publishing industry's attention to a mushrooming demand for Canadian audiobooks in the larger worldwide market.

CNIB, Canada's largest producer of audiobooks for consumers with a print disability, partnered with Audio Joe, Simply Audiobooks, Canadian Heritage, and publishers and authors of the winning GG titles in this unique "proof of concept" project to produce, market and retail the 2006 GGs.

The project's aim is threefold: to identify and increase market potential for digital audio for the Canadian publishing industry, which will raise the profile of Canadian authors internationally; to increase access to information for the three million Canadians who cannot read regular print due to a disability; and to facilitate the production of audiobooks for Canadian publishers who don't have the resources to undertake audio production themselves.

"We hope that this project will launch Canada as a contender in the digital audiobook market. The United States and Great Britain are significantly ahead of Canada, offering thousands of titles for people who want to listen to their favourite book. The portability of the digital download has really increased interest in audiobooks. Marketing the 2006 Governor General's Literary Awards in digital audio format for online retailing will be a significant step towards raising the profile of Canadian authors," said Shelagh Paterson, Director, Advocacy Sales and Marketing, CNIB.

"Our customers are always asking for more Canadian authors, so there definitely is a market. We hope projects like this one will provide incentive for more audio publishing in Canada," said Vitaly Petritchkovitch from Simply Audiobooks, a leading online retailer of downloadable Audiobooks.

Download, subscribe or listen to a sample of a GG book online at **www.simplyaudiobooks.ca**. People with vision loss can borrow directly from CNIB at **www.cnib.ca** .

For further information, please contact:
Shelagh Paterson
Director, Advocacy Sales and Marketing
CNIB
Tel: 416-486-2500, ext. 7670
email: **shelagh.paterson@cnib.ca**

ICAST

- by Mary Frances Laughton

ICAST (Intelligent Computational Assistive Science & Technology) is supported by York University, Precarn, and CIHR's Institute of Aging. It held its second meeting on October 4 at York University. More than 20 people were present. The ICAST website is now available and is being upgraded to be more accessible. It can be found at:
http://icast-canada.org/home/index.html .

The day started with two presentations, both now available on the website. They were: "Factors affecting the uptake of innovative technologies in health systems the Ontario experience", L. Levin, Senior Scientific, Medical and Health Technology Advisor and Head, Medical Advisory Secretariat, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and "CIHR New programs", L. Mealing Assistant Director, Partnerships, Institute of Aging-CIHR.

The balance of the meeting involved rounding out the ICAST Management Structure and the development of emerging work teams. The ICAST Task Force was created. Its membership can also be found on the website.

Four clusters were also assigned "leads". A cluster lead is assigned so that when someone visits the web pages, there is a name to contact for further information. These are:

Mobility - Ed Lemaire, University of Ottawa
Smart Homes - Hélène Pigot, Université de Sherbrooke
Elderly - Alex Mihailidis, University of Toronto
Communication - Melanie Baljko, York University

The participants from Sherbrooke (Patrick Boissy, Hélène Pigot, Tamie Salter)

volunteered to organize the next meeting likely during the spring of 2008. The group decided that John Tsotsos should remain as chair for two years, beginning Oct. 4, 2007.

It was decided to consider a single focus for the group: Future Assistive Living Environments. This does not preclude any other activities - sub-groups within ICAST may still decide to work on other issues together under the ICAST umbrella. In order to flesh out this single focus, a small group volunteered to prepare a "White Paper" that will be circulated and discussed at the next meeting. The committee is led by Joelle Pineau (McGill University), who will be assisted by Ed Lemaire (University of Ottawa), Alex Mihailidis (University of Toronto), and Patrick Boissy (Université de Sherbrooke).

Ontario leads the way with its Accessible Customer Service Legislation coming into effect 1 January, 2008

- by Beverley Milligan

On August 11, 2007, the Government of Ontario gazetted Ontario Regulation 429/07 and Ontario Regulation 430/07, Accessible Customer Service Standard that will come into force on January 1, 2008. This is the first of five accessibility regulations for Ontario that are being developed for full implementation by 2025 under the Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act, requiring all private and public sector organizations to provide access to people with disabilities in the areas of Customer Service, Transportation, Information and Communications, Employment, and the Built Environment.

In bringing the Customer Service regulation into effect, the Ontario Government, through the office of the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, has established Standard Development Committees (SDCs) and undergone extensive public consultations through both a public review process and encouraging all members of the SDC to consult with their constituencies. In doing so, reaction to the regulation has been all over the map, with affected organizations pushing for caution, while disability advocacy organizations argue it has not gone far enough.

Ontario Ministries and public sector organization will be required to comply with the regulation commencing 1 January, 2010, followed by all other organizations with 20 or more employees on 1 January, 2012.

Currently, accessibility laws in Ontario fall under the Ontarians with Disability Act (ODA), which requires public and broader public service organizations and ministries to file and Accessibility plan each year. It is anticipated that the ODA will be rescinded as AODA regulations come into effect.

There are many questions and issues surrounding the development of the regulations over the next five years, for example, what is the relationship with the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal? How can any organization comply with five different regulations? Or, what is the rest of Canada and the world doing in this area? I will address these and other questions in future articles and encourage you to e-mail me your thoughts and questions at **bmilligan@mediaaccess.ca** . You can also find more information at: **www.mcss.gov.on.ca/mcss/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario** .

Web Directions North

- by Derek Featherstone, Further Ahead Inc.

Web Directions North (**http://north08.webdirections.org**) is a conference to be held in Vancouver, BC, January 28 - February 2, 2008. The event promises to be a standout learning experience with talented Canadian speakers including Tara Hunt, Daniel Burka, Dave Shea, Derek Featherstone, Jonathan Snook and Boris Mann alongside other talented international speakers.

The event focusses on practical and inspiring concepts, technologies and techniques for people whose day to day job is building web sites, applications and services. It's for web designers, front and back end developers, product managers, Information Architects, and anyone else responsible for building accessible web solutions.

This is the second year for the conference in North America after Canadian web experts Dave Shea (Vancouver-based web designer) and Derek Featherstone (Ottawa-based web accessibility consultant) teamed up with their Australian partners to bring the successful conference series north of the equator.

For all the details visit: **http://north08.webdirections.org** .

Online Resource Helps Computer Users with Disabilities Locate Free/Inexpensive Hardware, Software

Adaptive computer software and hardware is often expensive, but there is a remarkable selection of free and inexpensive options available to computer users with disabilities. This isn't well known, however, so the Adaptech Research Network expanded its online database of free and inexpensive adaptive technology (**http://adaptech.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/fandi_e.php**) as part of its work in the Dis-IT Research Alliance.

The database now covers over 125 products in eight categories including writing tools, screen magnifiers, screen readers, dictation software, and optical character

recognition software.

The Adaptech Research Network (**adaptech.dawsoncollege.qc.ca**) conducts research on the use of computer, information, and adaptive technologies by Canadian college and university students with disabilities. The Dis-IT Research Alliance (**www.dis-it.ca**) was supported by grants from the Initiative on the New Economy program of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

One-of-a-Kind Research Facility to be Built in Toronto

On October 3, the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute (Toronto Rehab) announced its $36 million research initiative - iDAPT (Intelligent Design for Adaptation, Participation and Technology). Located in the heart of Canada's 'Discovery District' in downtown Toronto, approximately 60,000 square feet of renovated and newly constructed space for 14 different research laboratories - will be dedicated to the iDAPT facilities and rehabilitation research. It will be one of the world's most advanced rehabilitation research and development facilities - a place where new therapies and assistive technologies will be developed for people recovering from, and living with, disabling injury or illness.

Led by Dr. Geoff Fernie, Toronto Rehab's Vice President, Research, and in collaboration with the University of Toronto, iDAPT will bring together the brightest research minds and state-of-the-art technology in a collaborative venture, one that involves hundreds of scientists, research students, clinicians, social scientists, engineers and industrial designers from across Canada and beyond.

"iDAPT offers new hope," says Dr. Fernie. "iDAPT will help people with disabilities and older people to adapt to new challenges and equip them with assistive devices that actually work in the real world so that they can get on with their lives."

iDAPT facilities will enable researchers to safely study the complex interactions between people and their environment and help people with disabilities adapt to their new challenges, and equip them with innovative and well-designed products that they will actually use and benefit from.

"Until now, our ability to study how people with disabilities and older people function in the real world has been limited by a lack of the unique in situ facilities that iDAPT will provide," says Dr. Fernie. "Current assistive devices often do not function well in real-life environments, are generally not attractively designed or as user friendly as consumers would like."

"Getting around in winter is an issue. As soon as there is snow on the ground or ice, traction becomes a problem", says John Shepherd, spinal cord injury survivor and

former Toronto Rehab patient. "I've learned that as soon as there's more than maybe an inch, or inch and a half of snow, I simply can't go outside. It's not that it's difficult for me to go outside. I just literally can't move. I can't get groceries, I can't go to the pharmacy, can't do the most basic things, never mind get to my job, go see friends, or have a social life."

John adds that assistive devices are designed by people who may not understand the needs of users well. iDAPT facilities will enable researchers and designers to produce more user-friendly assistive devices and technologies that people with disabilities will actually use and benefit from.

The demand for rehabilitation therapies and assistive technologies, such as wheelchairs and other mobility aids, is increasing as Canada's population ages and more lives are saved thanks to advances in medical science and technology.

The number of people with disabilities is on the rise worldwide. In Canada alone, over 3.6 million (about one in eight) Canadians currently have a significant disability. Disability affects most Canadian families at some time - and costs the Canadian economy an estimated $60 billion annually.

Part of the Toronto Rehab's multi-million dollar capital redevelopment, iDAPT will be housed at the hospital's University Centre (550 University Ave., Toronto) and Lyndhurst Centre (520 Sutherland Dr., Toronto) and in the Rehabilitation Sciences building at the University of Toronto (500 University Ave., Toronto). iDAPT facilities will include:

- a state-of-the-art, subterranean laboratory called the Challenging Environment Assessment Laboratory (CEAL) that will be built deep below the hospital's soon-to-be redeveloped University Centre, equipped with a giant hydraulic simulator that can generate winter-like conditions including ice, snow, howling winds and slopes. A motion simulator will enable researchers to safely test people's balance and mobility devices in real-life situations;

- a typical hospital patient care room, with an overhead catwalk for observation, where researchers can develop and test new technologies to assist nurses and reduce caregiver injuries;

- a laboratory featuring a modest single-story house where researchers can develop artificial intelligence and smart home technologies to help people with dementia and other disabilities to live as independently as possible, and improve their quality of life; and

- a movement evaluation laboratory that will advance research on treatments for paralysis from stroke and spinal cord injury.

Building on existing Toronto Rehab research, iDAPT will also include a sleep laboratory where scientists can advance recent finding linking treatment for sleep disturbances to better patient outcomes.

Several iDAPT laboratories and workshops are already open and research is currently taking place. The Rehabilitation Engineering Laboratory at the hospital's Lyndhurst Centre, for example, is already working on research to help restore or replace functions of the human neuromuscular system once damaged. New and innovative assistive devices are being designed and prototyped in the interdisciplinary Research and Design Studio and cutting-edge Rapid Prototyping Workshop.

It is anticipated that the remaining iDAPT labs and workspaces - including the hallmark of iDAPT, CEAL - will be operational by 2011, when the University Centre redevelopment is expected to be complete.

Funding for iDAPT has been provided by the federal government through the Canada Foundation for Innovation, by the provincial government through the Ontario Innovation Trust and the Ontario Ministry of Research and Innovation, as well as by Toronto Rehab Foundation, the University of Toronto and private donors.

Toronto Rehab is at the forefront of one of the most important and emerging frontiers in health care today - rehabilitation science. Toronto Rehab is one of Canada's leading academic rehabilitation science centres providing adult rehabilitation services, complex continuing care, and long-term care. More information is available at: **www.torontorehab.com** .

News Bits

Early in 2006, ADIO entered into a partnership with Ed Biden and the University of New Brunswick (UNB) to do an assessment of the Assistive Devices Industry. The objectives were to understand the industry better in terms of its objectives and also to see where and how the industry recruits employees and how the industry interacts with its clients. The final report, "Assessment of the Assistive Devices Industry in Canada" is now available on the UNB web site at: **http://hdl.handle.net/1882/1017** .

In October, Beverley Milligan founder, President and CEO of Canada Caption Inc. and responseTV, joined the Media Access Centre, Inc, MAC, as Senior Vice President. In this role, Beverley will develop the accessibility division of the company through applying her expertise with the ADOA, 2005 legislation, her long standing work with accessible converging technologies and her proven strategic business development skills. "I look forward to being able to support private and public sector organizations in determining policy objectives, best practices and

recommendations for complying with not only existing federal regulatory framework, but also as we move into a new era of accessibility legislation for Ontario", said Ms. Milligan. She founded MAC in September 2006 and her most recent work has been as the Employment and Information and Communications standards lead with the Ontario Government. She has authored numerous standards including the creation of the foundation document which the Canadian Association of Broadcasters now uses as its voluntary code for Closed Captioning in Canada. Ms. Milligan is currently working to consolidate a partnership that would create open standards for Audio Description. MAC has offices in Toronto and Oakville, Ontario. The company provides specialist advice to organizations on how ensure accessibility in all aspects of the organization. For more information contact: Beverley Milligan at Tel.: 416 737-0457, email: **bmilligan@mediaaccess.ca** .

On October 11, Dr. Morris (Mickey) Milner, President and CEO of htx.ca - The Health Technology Exchange (**www.htx.ca**), announced the appointment of Daniel Lynch as VP Commercialization. In this new role Dan is focused on achieving the vision and aims of HTX, to accelerate the growth of Ontario's medical and assistive technologies (MAT) industry cluster. From his successful career with IRAP, the Industrial Research Assistance Program of the National Research Council Canada, and his related experience with similar not-for-profit medical and assistive technologies organizations, Dan brings an in-depth understanding of all aspects of the commercialization environment of the MAT sector. This includes the academic to industry liaison process, the challenges and requirements of start-up and early stage companies, and the need to further develop, communicate and collaborate with the network of entrepreneurs, angel investors, venture capitalists, private and public financiers, government agencies, consultants, brokers and mentors required to facilitate, support and develop an enhanced Small and Medium Size Enterprise (SME) base which will lead to more export-ready products and companies. HTX supports the growth of a dynamic, prosperous Ontario medical and assistive technologies industry sector that aligns with and advances world-class health care, enabling enhanced healthy living for its citizens.

Ottawa's HealthCraft Products Inc. (**www.healthcraftproducts.com**) was honoured in October as the winner of the 2007 Medtrade Innovation Award for their Dependa-Bar with Bath Board. The Dependa-Bar with Bath Board is a complete bath safety solution that eliminates reaching and features a pivoting and locking rail that moves with the user for optimal support when sitting, standing or transferring in and out of the bathtub. Medtrade is a trade show held twice a year for the home healthcare industry. The fall show, which was held in Orlando, Florida, hosted more than 725 exhibitors from around the world. For more information about HealthCraft Products, visit their web site or contact Ian Crawford, Marketing, HealthCraft Products Inc. at 2790 Fenton Rd., Ottawa, Ontario, K1T 3T7, tel.: 613-822-1885, Toll Free: 888-619-9992 , Fax: 613-822-1886, email: **ian@healthcraftproducts.com** .

Another Canadian company, PDG Product Design Group (**www.PDGmobility.com**), was also a winner at Medtrade. PDG's Fuze T50 Power Tilt wheelchair won the Provider's Choice Award. The Fuze T50 Power Tilt, which was introduced at Medtrade, allows the user or attendant to control tilt using a conveniently located switch. This lightweight addition to the Fuze T50 makes for easy maneuvering by clients or caregivers.

Also in October, Shawn Henry was appointed as Chair of the Web Accessibility Initiative's Education and Outreach Working Group (WAI EOWG). She takes over in this position from Judy Brewer, who will continue to participate on the EOWG, as well as the many and varied other W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) groups on which she serves. Information on the W3C and its working groups can be found at **www.w3c.org** .

On November 7, it was announced that Dr Richard Mander, HumanWare's CEO is leaving the company. Gilles Pepin, the CEO of the HumanWare Canada business division has been appointed the new CEO of the HumanWare group effective immediately. In making this announcement, the company said, "HumanWare would like to thank Dr. Mander for his steadfast work in assuring the continuity and growth of HumanWare following the death of one of the company founder, Russell Smith, in 2005. Dr. Mander was fully committed in keeping HumanWare as the leading innovative organization in the industry." Mr. Pepin became President and CEO of HumanWare's Canadian subsidiary when his company, VisuAide, merged with New Zealand-based Pulse Data International in January of 2005. In August that year, he was named Acting CEO of HumanWare, following Dr. Smith's death. HumanWare continues to provide innovative new devices for blind and low vision users. For example, on November 15, the company announced that its Victor Reader Stream, the pocket-sized portable MP3 player designed for blind and low-vision people now has the capability to play the popular Audible.com books. In addition to the variety of audio formats (MP3, DAISY, and NISO books and music) supported by Victor Reader Stream, the Audible format will provide a huge additional choice of content to the users. Audible is the leading provider of spoken audio on the internet, providing over 140,000 hours of digital audio editions of books, newspapers and magazines. For more information on HumanWare and its products, visit their web site at: **www.humanware.com** .

A thematic workshop on "Web Accessibility Guidelines Development and UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" was held in Rio de Janeiro on November 12. The purpose was to revisit internet accessibility guidelines and standards to meet the requirements of persons with disabilities in the light of the first human rights convention of the UN adopted in the 21st Century to enrich the discussion of the main sessions on Diversity. Mary Frances Laughton was one of the workshop organizers and panelists for the session were: Monthian Buntan, President, Thailand Association of the Blind; Shadi Abou-Zahra, Web Accessibility Specialist,

W3C; Stephen Shore, Board, Autism Society of America; Rosangela Berman Bieler, Director, Inter-American Institute on Disability; Martha Lucia Osorno Posada, Board, World Federation of the Deaf; Sylvia Caras, President, People Who; and Moderator: Hiroshi Kawamura, President, DAISY Consortium. For more information about the workshop, please contact Hiroshi Kawamura at: **hkawa@attglobal.net** .

The First Annual Disability Awareness Event will be held at the Hamilton Convention Center on the evening of January 26. This event will focus on the rollout of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. There will be keynote speakers and presentations that will create a snapshot of accessibility and inclusion in Ontario. Tickets are $50, with the proceeds going to defray the cost of the event, as well as to area disability service providers. For more information, call Ben Bishop, Executive Director of Facilitation and Technology, Community Functionality Facilitation Inc., at 905-961-6728, email him at **benb@communityfunction.org** or visit the web site at: **www.communityfunction.org** .

The Canadian Foundation for Animal-Assisted Support Services is looking for exhibitors and presenters for its 2008 Animal-Assisted Support Services Bridge Builders Initiative. The theme for this event, which will be held April 25-27, 2008 at the North Grenville Municipal Centre in Kemptville, Ontario is "Connect, Communicate, & Collaborate". Highlights include a Showcase of Animal-Assisted Support Services; Networking Opportunities; Build new Bridges; Celebrate Achievements; Professional Development; Information Exchange; and Explore Next Steps. Poster Presentations (mini-workshop) are open to anyone who is attending the event. Poster Presentations may be on display boards, PowerPoint Presentations, handouts, or hands-on activities. Due to space restrictions therapeutic riding presentations will be showcased either in a presentation in the theatre or by poster presentations. For those planning to present papers, abstracts will be considered by Selection Committee and will be accepted until December 31, 2007 at 5:00 p.m. Further information and online registration is available at: **www.cf4aass.org** .

Madentec Limited of Edmonton, Alberta (**www.madentec.com**) are hosting their 2nd annual AT Training Cruise. Last year's AT Training Cruise was a huge success, with over 40 Assistive Technology professionals taking part in the training, and over 60 people joining the group on the cruise. What could be more exciting, than five days aboard the glorious Grandeur Of The Sea cruise ship from Royal Caribbean Cruise lines? The cruise begins in Tampa, Florida and stops in Cozumel and Yucatan (Progreso), Mexico. The cruise runs from February 4-9, 2008 and includes 15 hours of computer access training with "Real Access" sessions presented by such AT professionals as Kelly Fonner, Dan Herlihy, Scott Marfilius, and Patti Rea. There will also be a guest appearance from one of the premier Morse Code access users in the world, Steve Harper.

A year ago, people with disabilities, accessibility consultants, lawyers, equipment manufacturers, and researchers gathered in Winnipeg for Hard-Wiring Inclusion, a conference presented by the Disability and Information Technologies (Dis-IT) Research Alliance. The two day conference featured panel discussions featuring panelists from industry, government, and the disability community, as well as presentations about Dis-IT's research. A detailed report about the conference is now available at **www.dis-it.ca/events.php** .

Upcoming Conferences in Canada

Here's what's happening in Canada between December 1, 2007 and March 31, 2008. Please note that the language in each of the following entries is the language in which the conference was submitted to the conference list:

January 28 - February 2, 2008
Web Directions North
Vancouver, BC, Canada
Contact: Derek Featherstone
1485 Laperrière Avenue
Ottawa, ON, K1Z 7S8 Canada
Tel: 613-798-5291
email: **north@webdirections.org**
URL: **north08.webdirections.org**

March 5 - 8, 2008
24th International Seating Symposium
Vancouver, BC, CANADA
Contact: Yolande Chang
Tel: 604-822-7524
email: **ipad@interchange.ubc.ca**
URL: **www.interprofessional.ubc.ca**

For more conference listings, including what's coming up in other countries, see the "Conference Listings in Assistive Devices" link on the ADIO Web site: **www.at-links.gc.ca/as/as001E.asp** . This is also the link you should use to submit your conferences (Canadian or international) for inclusion in the listings.

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **www.at-links.gc.ca**. At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Deb Finn or Mary Frances Laughton
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4297 or 613-990-4316
fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
email: **adio@crc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Government Publications

Industry Canada Industrie Canada

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

Winter 2008

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 33

Visit Us at CSUN

ADIO will be back again this year at the annual Technology & Disability Conference, which is presented by California State University, Northridge (CSUN: **www.csun.edu/cod/conf/2008**) in Los Angeles from March 10-15. If you are attending CSUN, drop by and say hello. You'll find us in Booth Number 336 in the Marriott Hotel's main exhibit hall. Just look for the booth with the big Canadian flag.

This year, our booth will again have product literature on display from various Canadian AT companies and organizations, along with the Accessible Procurement Toolkit.

CRTC approves initiatives to benefit Canadians with disabilities and expand rural broadband services

On January 17, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) today approved several initiatives that will benefit Canadians with disabilities and expand broadband services to rural and remote communities. The major local telephone companies were also directed by the Commission to finalize proposals for the dispersal of the funds in their deferral accounts.

"Today's decision will not only make telecommunications services more accessible to all Canadians, but also serve to enhance social and economic development in underserved communities," said Len Katz, the CRTC's Vice-Chairman of Telecommunications.

In 2002, the Commission set out its price cap framework. This included rules governing the rates charged to residential and business consumers as well as to competitor companies by the major local telephone companies. One of the elements of the price regulation regime was the deferral account.

Price cap regulation places a ceiling on prices a company can charge its customers. At the same time, in order to avoid an adverse impact on local competition as a result of mandated rate reductions under the price cap framework, the Commission required each major local telephone company to create a deferral account. The companies were requested to place into those accounts amounts equal to the revenue reductions that would otherwise have resulted from an application of the price cap formula.

In 2006, the Commission determined that the funds that had accumulated in the deferral accounts should be used for the expansion of broadband (high-speed Internet) services and for initiatives to improve accessibility to telecommunications services for persons with disabilities. The Commission also concluded that any funds remaining after these initiatives had been approved should be rebated to the companies' residential local service subscribers in non-high-cost serving areas.

In 2007, the Commission revised its price cap framework and eliminated the deferral account mechanism. As such, no funds will be accumulated in the deferral accounts on a going forward basis.

The proposals approved by the Commission in January include initiatives to improve accessibility to telecommunications services for persons with disabilities in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec. In developing their proposals, the companies consulted with federal and provincial governments, national and provincial organizations representing persons with disabilities, and researchers in the field.

The proposals included initiatives to:

- introduce Internet Protocol Relay, a text-based tool that would allow persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or have difficulty speaking to communicate through the telephone system with hearing persons through a relay agent;

- introduce Video Relay Service, a service that would allow a person using sign language and another person using voice to communicate through a relay agent via high-speed Internet and video camera;

- improve Voice Activated Dialling service;

- enhance Directory Assistance;

- improve access to certain telecommunications services for persons with sight and mobility disabilities;

- improve accessibility to the websites of some of the major local telephone companies;

- establish a single point of contact for persons with disabilities to receive customer service tailored to the specific needs of the customer;

- conduct research into the needs of persons with disabilities during the development process of new products and services; and

- provide free teletypewriter (TTY) units to all Transition Houses in Saskatchewan. With this decision, as well as one issued in July 2007, funds will also be used to expand broadband services to more than 350 rural and remote communities in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec.

Any funds remaining in the deferral accounts will be rebated to the relevant residential subscribers living in urban areas in these provinces. The Commission directed the major local telephone companies to file, by March 25, 2008, proposals outlining how rebates could be most effectively made both in terms of benefits to customers and minimal disruption to companies.

It is estimated that over $650 million has accumulated in the deferral accounts since they were created in 2002. Bell Aliant (in Ontario and Quebec), Bell Canada, MTS Allstream, SaskTel and TELUS were required to place into their accounts an amount equal to the revenue reductions that would otherwise have resulted from the application of the price cap formula.

The full text of the decision can be found on the CTRC Web site: Telecom Decision CRTC 2008-1
(**www.crtc.gc.ca/archive/eng/decisions/2008/dt2008-1.htm**)

Canadian Transportation Agency decides in favour of one-person-one-fare policy

On January 10, the Canadian Transportation Agency has ordered Air Canada, Air Canada Jazz and WestJet to adopt a one-person-one-fare policy for persons with severe disabilities who travel within Canada by air. The airlines have one year to implement the policy. The tribunal's Decision means that for domestic services, Air Canada, Air Canada Jazz and WestJet may not charge more than one fare for persons with disabilities who are accompanied by an attendant for their personal care or safety in flight, as required by the carriers' domestic tariffs, or require additional seating for themselves, including those determined to be functionally disabled by obesity for purposes of air travel.

The Decision does NOT apply to persons with disabilities or others who prefer to travel with a companion for personal reasons; persons with disabilities who require a personal care attendant at destination, but not in-flight; and persons who are obese but not disabled as a result of their obesity.

The airlines are expected to develop a screening process to assess eligibility under the one-person-one-fare policy. For persons who travel with an attendant as required by the carriers' domestic tariffs, the Decision notes that carriers already

perform assessments and have screening mechanisms to determine fitness and conditions for travel. Their screening mechanisms could be adapted to include functional assessments, and related screening expertise is available to them. For persons disabled by obesity, the Agency cites the practical experience of Southwest Airlines, which screens for entitlement to an additional seat by determining whether a person can lower the seat's armrests.

The airlines failed to demonstrate to the Agency that implementation of a one-person-one-fare policy will impose undue hardship on them. The Agency estimates that the cost of implementing the one-person-one-fare policy represents 0.09 per cent of Air Canada's annual passenger revenues of $8.2 billion and 0.16 per cent of WestJet's equivalent revenues of $1.4 billion.

The three applicants in the case were the Council of Canadians with Disabilities, Joanne Neubauer of Victoria, and the Estate of the late Eric Norman, who was a resident of Gander, Newfoundland and Labrador.

In a separate statement, the Agency offered to facilitate a collaborative process for implementation of the one-person-one-fare Decision. "It would be desirable to have a common screening approach to determine eligibility to benefit under the one-person-one-fare policy," said Geoffrey Hare, Chairman and CEO of the Agency. "A co-operative approach would be potentially beneficial to Air Canada, Air Canada Jazz, WestJet and the Gander International Airport Authority as well as other Canadian air carriers and airport authorities that may consider voluntary implementation of the one-person-one-fare policy."

13th Biennial Conference of the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC 2008)

- by Ann Sutton and Jeff Riley, conference co-chairs

"Leading the way" is the theme of ISAAC 2008, which will be held in Montreal in August 2008. ISAAC and its members have been leaders in AAC around the world for almost 25 years. ISAAC officially began in 1983 with a small group of individuals and has grown into an organization that is recognized internationally for the expertise, dedication, and creativity of its members.

There is much to celebrate in 2008, ISAAC's 25th anniversary. The field of AAC has changed enormously in the last 25 years, and will continue to evolve in the future. Technological advances and new perspectives on human communication have shaped the evolution of AAC. Individuals who use AAC for their daily communication have increasingly taken on leadership roles in many different

ways. Examples of leadership will be showcased as part of the 2008 conference program. Papers, presentations, and discussions of research projects, clinical and educational concerns, and issues of interest to individuals who use AAC systems will round out the program.

The conference committees are preparing an exceptional event. In addition to the exciting main conference program, there will be pre-conference workshops on current topics in AAC, and the research symposium following the main conference will be a must for AAC researchers. Montreal is the perfect site for the 2008 conference. A city with an interesting history and a bright future, Montreal is a lively place to visit, especially in the summertime. There will be opportunities to take advantage of all Montreal has to offer.

We are looking forward to welcoming ISAAC to Montreal in 2008. See you there!

August 2-7, 2008
Montreal, Quebec
www.isaac2008.org

ISAAC 2008 – JPdL
email: **isaac2008@jpdl.com**
1555 Peel, Suite 500
Montreal, Quebec H3A 3L8
tel: 514-287-1070
fax: 514-287-1248

Industry Alliance Formed to Improve Access to Technology

On December 10, a coalition of leading information and assistive technology companies that includes Edmonton's Madentec (**www.madentec.com**) announced the formation of the Accessibility Interoperability Alliance (AIA). This is an engineering working group dedicated to enabling developers to more easily create accessible software, hardware and web products. Four projects have been chosen to begin the AIA's work:

- developing a set of keyboard shortcuts to provide consistent behaviour to users of assistive technology (AT) products in any Web browser;

- modifying and/or extending existing accessibility models (Microsoft UI Automation, IAccessible2 and others) to improve the interoperability and exchange of information between IT and AT products;

- UI Automation extensions, which will add features and capabilities to support additional rich document scenarios, address new web scenarios and more; and

- an Accessible Rich Internet Applications Suite (ARIA) mapping of rich web accessibility information through UI Automation to ensure maximum value for AT products.

In addition to Madentec, AIA founding members include IT companies such as Adobe, BayFirst Solutions LLC, Microsoft and Novell Inc., hardware manufacturer HP and AT companies such as Claro Software Ltd., Dolphin Computer Access, GW Micro Inc., HiSoftware Inc., Texthelp Systems and QualiLife. Leading nongovernmental organizations may also participate and share their expertise on these and future AIA projects. More information on AIA can be found at **www.AccessInteropAlliance.org** .

HumanWare Reorganizes its Operations

On January 14, HumanWare (**www.humanware.com**) announced that it would be reorganizing its activities. HumanWare is integrating its Research and Development, Marketing and Production operations under a single line of responsibility for each department. Sales activities are also integrated under three new geographical regions: the Americas, Europe (including Middle East and Africa) and Australasia.

Three new vice-presidents for Marketing, Research and Development, and Operations respectively have been appointed and will be responsible for both New Zealand and Canadian activities. The business managers for the United States, Europe and Australia business divisions will see their responsibilities extended into new geographical markets.

This reorganization results from the appointment of Mr. Gilles Pepin as the new CEO of the HumanWare Group in November 2007. His objective is to build a strong management structure to support HumanWare's growth in its activities in the visually impaired segment and across new markets.

"We are creating a stronger, more efficient and more dynamic operational structure to better support our existing customers and products, but also to introduce new initiatives such as enhanced customer focus, superior product quality and a wider range of product solutions," said Gilles Pepin, HumanWare's CEO. "To achieve this, we need to streamline our operations and better integrate our activities, some of which are over extended across the globe."

HumanWare expects to reap major benefits for its customers as a result of this reorganization, such as reduced product development cycle, lower product costs and higher product quality. HumanWare will keep introducing new exciting products in 2008 following several major product introductions in 2007, including Victor Reader Stream, ClassMate Reader, myReader 2 and a Math tutorial for the BrailleNote mPower.

The following people within the organization have been assigned new Group responsibilities: Greg Brown as Corporate Controller, Richard Nadeau as VP of Operations, Pierre Hamel as VP of Research and Development and Ivan Lagacé as VP of Marketing. Ron Hathaway, Managing Director of Australia and Asia will now add New Zealand Sales to his responsibilities. Renee Gosselin is now the Manager of Market Development for all products. Pedro Polson and Phil Rance are keeping the same positions.

Federal Elevator Celebrates 20th Anniversary

Federal Elevator (**www.federalelevator.com**), a leader in the manufacturing of elevators for the use of the elderly and disabled is turning 20 years old in April 2008. The achievement of this significant milestone finds the Company in the midst of continuing growth with double digit increases in elevators shipped to the Canadian, US and international markets.

During 2007, the Company introduced the Legacy, its new Residential Elevator loaded with many special features and capabilities to enhance the ability to be used by persons in need of vertical transportation. Operating from its own modern, state of the art manufacturing facility in Brampton, Ontario, Federal Elevator is happy to be reaching 20 years in business and is poised for continuous growth supplying high quality, value priced elevators.

T-Base Communications Celebrates with Canada Post in Breaking Guinness World Record™

In November it was announced that Canada Post had received recognition from the Guinness World Records™ for helping Santa respond to the largest volume of letters to Santa - letters that are answered in more than 25 languages, including braille. Ottawa's T-Base Communications (**www.tbase.com**) provided the braille translations to Canada Post at no charge. T-Base established a long-term partnership with Canada Post in 2002, benefiting blind, deaf-blind and partially sighted children from around the world. Each year, T-Base ensures that Santa can respond directly to blind, deaf-blind and partially sighted children, replying to

wish lists received in braille on a daily basis. Letters in braille have been received and alternatively responded to throughout Canada in both official languages, and the program has been as far-reaching as Belgium, France and India.

"This partnership has greatly benefited the Letters to Santa program, assisting in setting the Guinness record by making it possible to reach more children worldwide," says Robert Waite, senior vice-president, Stakeholder Relations and Brand at Canada Post.

"With the Santa Letter-writing Program, Canada Post truly delivers. Their ongoing recognition of the importance for blind, deaf-blind and partially sighted children to independently write to, and receive letters from Santa is commendable," says Sharlyn Ayotte, President and CEO of T-Base Communications. "We consider ourselves privileged to provide a service that brings the magic of Christmas to a greater number of children, subsequently contributing to Canada Post's impressive record-breaking numbers," adds Ayotte.

T-Base will continue to work with Canada Post on the Santa Letter-writing Program in the coming years, further extending the reach to children with disabilities next year by offering expanded alternate format communications such as large print, e-text and audio formats.

Upcoming Conferences in Canada

Here's what's happening in Canada between March 1 and May 31, 2008. Please note that the language in each of the following entries is the language in which the conference was submitted to the conference list:

March 5 - 8, 2008
24th International Seating Symposium
Vancouver, BC, CANADA
Contact: Yolande Chang
Tel: 604-822-7524
email: **ipad@interchange.ubc.ca**
URL: **www.interprofessional.ubc.ca**

For more conference listings, including what's coming up in other countries, see the "Conference Listings in Assistive Devices" link on the ADIO Web site: **www.at-links.gc.ca/as/as001E.asp** . This is also the link you should use to submit your conferences (Canadian or international) for inclusion in the listings.

News Bits

In December, HumanWare (**www.humanware.ca**) announced that Ken Patterson had joined the ranks of its Western Canada sales force. His responsibilities will be to work closely with Western Canada Sales Manager Steven Phillips to make sure that customers in Western Canada receive quality equipment, training and after sales support. Ken worked for the CNIB for 20 years and prior to joining HumanWare, he had been responsible for the Assistive Technology Department in the CNIB's Calgary office.

On December 19, the United Nations General Assembly renamed the International Day of Disabled Persons, observed every year on 3 December, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The 192 Member States of the General Assembly took that decision unanimously when adopting a resolution on "Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons: realizing the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities". The Assembly also called on United Nations agencies and bodies engaged in development, humanitarian assistance and protection of the environment to ensure that the disability perspective is incorporated in their work.

On January 15, Burlington, Ontario's EPIC Software (**www.epic-soft.com**), a privately held Human Resources Software and Professional Services Consulting firm announced that it will be launching a new Software as a Service (SaaS) product to assist organizations manage their Work Place Health and Safety (H&S) programs and audits more efficiently and cost effectively. Liz Jansen, the company's Managing Director for Canada said, "Given EPIC Software's excellent research, product development and implementation teams, the recently heightened visibility of work place health and safety initiatives by the Government of the Province of Ontario and The Workplace Safety & Insurance Board's "Road to Zero" initiative, it makes perfectly good sense that EPIC Software is the first software provider to launch a fully integrated Health & Safety Audit Management System. EPIC Software's Health & Safety Audit Management System includes forms that can be downloaded, edited in MS-WORD and then posted to the system to ensure a single system of record captures the required documentation; date and time-stamping every document as it is uploaded into the system. This work flow makes H&S Accident Reports, Committee Meetings and Audits, to name only a few of the detailed H&S Processes and reporting requirements, much more effective, efficient and easy to administer and track" Jansen also added. For more information, please visit the EPIC Software web site or contact Liz Jansen, B.A., CHRP, Director - Canada, tel.: 519-938-9094, North America Toll Free Messaging: 1-800-627-415, email: **liz.jansen@epic-soft.com** .

The Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA: **www.atia.org**) held its 9th annual conference in Orlando, Florida from January 30 to February 2 and once again, Canadian AT companies were present to show off their innovative products and to provide expert advice and information at conference sessions. Exhibitors included Compusult (**www.compusult.nf.ca**), Daedalus Technologies and Adaptive Computer Control Technologies (**www.acctinc.ca**), HumanWare (**www.humanware.ca**), Madentec (**www.madentec.com**), Quillsoft (**www.wordq.com**) and Tash (**www.tashinc.com**).

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **www.at-links.gc.ca**. At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Deb Finn or Mary Frances Laughton
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4297 or 613-990-4316
fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
email: **adio@crc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Government Publications

Industry Canada Industrie Canada
Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

LIBRARY
JUN 26 2008
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Spring 2008

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 34

CSUN Round-Up

ADIO was back again this year at the annual Technology & Disability Conference, which is presented by California State University, Northridge (CSUN: **www.csun.edu/cod/conf/2008**) in Los Angeles from March 10-15. Our booth attracted many of the more than 4,500 conference attendees from around the world who were interested in finding out about Canadian assistive technology and others who were just curious about Canada.

As has been our habit for the past few years, we provided display space for companies' product literature. This practice impresses many of our visitors and an often-heard comment from non-Canadians is "I wish my country's government provided the kind of support to business that your country does!" Twenty-five companies and organizations took us up on our offer of display space this year.

There were some major changes to the conference schedule this year. In the past, there has been a three-hour exhibit preview held for registered conference attendees only on Wednesday afternoon (the day before the conference starts), with the exhibits open to the public from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Thursday and Friday and until 1:00 p.m. on Saturday. This year, there was no exhibit preview and the exhibits were open on Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Friday from 9:00 to 5:00 and on Saturday from 9:30 to 5:00. Many exhibitors found the extended hours difficult to manage and exhibit hall attendance after the last conference session ended at mid-day on Saturday was very low. As a result, CSUN 2009's organizers will go back to a regime of holding the exhibit hall preview from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. on the Wednesday, 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Thursday and Friday and 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday. The dates for the 2009 conference will be March 16-21 at the Los Angeles Airport Marriott and Renaissance Montura Hotels.

French Language Closed Captioning for the House of Commons Provided by PWGSC's Translation Bureau

On October 22, the House of Commons, in partnership with Public Works and Government Services Canada's Translation Bureau and the Centre de recherche informatique de Montréal (CRIM), began providing French language closed captioning of Question Period on the Cable Public Affairs Channel (CPAC). The introduction of this new service, based on the state-of-the-art voice recognition technology developed by CRIM, enables the three million Canadians with hearing loss to follow parliamentary proceedings live and in the official language of their choice.

This service also puts the House of Commons at the forefront of parliamentary institutions when it comes to using innovative technologies to further facilitate access to information. In fact, according to the members of the focus group who actively participated in evaluating this new technology, "the House of Commons French language closed captioning project opens the doors of Parliament to all hard-of-hearing; deaf and deafened Canadians."

Now there is more reason than ever to tune in to Question Period, available on CPAC with closed captioning in French, on **CC3**, or in English, on **CC1**.

For broadcast times, please check the Schedule at **www.cpac.ca** . Also Hansard, as official record of the Oral Questions, can be found under Latest Debates of the House of Commons on the Parliament of Canada's Web site at **www.parl.gc.ca** .

Aroga Expands its Operations

Aroga has expanded its operations and has brought on four new team members to their offices across the country:

Jessica Gladio - Administrative Assistant - Montreal Office
Jessica joins the team in the crucial role of Administrative Assistant in their Montreal office.

Ernest Lau - Shipper / Receiver - Vancouver
Ernest brings with him a strong background in technology companies and shipping and receiving to the Vancouver office, and also is responsible for warehouse maintenance and inventory.

Chris Lentinen - Technician - ATS Vancouver
Chris adds a significant capacity to ATS, Aroga's national Service Center, ensuring that it remains the best in the industry. Chris possesses years of experience in repairing consumer electronics and will ensure that the company's capabilities remain synchronized with the demands of Aroga's customers.

Richard Svekla - Technology Specialist
Richard is the company's new Assistive Technology Specialist in the Edmonton office and brings with him a wealth of knowledge in both the educational and technological fields.

Since 1987, Aroga has been serving the needs of Canadians with disabilities. During this time they have assisted thousands of individuals in pursuing employment, education, and most importantly, a more independent and rewarding lifestyle.

For over 20 years, Aroga has strived to help their clients attain a measure of independence with their policy of lifetime technical support, price matching, and extended product warranties. They offer assistive technology in four major product areas: low vision, blindness, communication aids and physical access. Visit them online at **www.aroga.com** .

Call for Blind and Partially Sighted Athletes - Nominations for T-Base Annual Sponsorship

On May 1, Ottawa's T-Base Communications Inc. announced that they are now accepting nominations of blind and partially sighted athletes for the 2008/2009 T-Base Athletic Sponsorship. This annual sponsorship is awarded in the spirit of T-Base Communications, to a blind or partially sighted athlete dedicated to a competitive sport who exemplifies the drive for success and commitment in his/her athletic endeavours.

T-Base provides recipients of the annual sponsorship with various communication materials such as braille business cards and speaking notes in an accessible format of choice. "We believe T-Base's ongoing support reflects our commitment to providing competitive blind athletes with the accessible materials they need, and the exposure to personal achievements they deserve," said Sharlyn Ayotte, president and CEO of T-Base Communications.

Paralympian Jason Dunkerley was selected for the 2007/2008 Sponsorship program. Jason, a blind runner who navigates the track through directional and verbal cues from a sighted guide running closely beside him, is the current Canadian record holder for both the 800m and 1500m track events for his B1 class. He earned silver medals at both the 2000 and 2004 Paralympic Games, and aspires to represent Canada at the 2008 Games in Beijing, China. In his most recent competition, Jason placed first in the 800m and 1500m events at the Para Pan American Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, winning Canada two gold medals.

In order to submit a nomination, please send emails to: **chayes@tbase.com** on or before August 1, 2008, with the name of the athlete in the email message subject line, an explanation (40 lines or less) outlining the goals and ambitions of the nominee and the location, if any, of additional information on which your nomination is based (i.e. Website, articles, etc.) T-Base sponsorship eligibility is limited to North American residents and while previous recipients of the sponsorship are not eligible for nomination, re-submission of previous nominees is encouraged. The 2008/2009 recipient's name will be announced on August 18, 2008.

For more information about T-Base Communications or about their Athletic Sponsorship, please visit **www.tbase.com** .

Ontario Businesses, Schools, Taking Accessibility to New Levels

Ontario's Accessible Customer Service Standard (**www.AccessON.ca**) came into force in January this year and both the private and public sectors began gearing up to meet the challenge, even before the standard took effect.

The Shaw Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake, known for its world class stage productions, began work more than a year ago to make their performances accessible and welcoming to a wider audience. Seneca College, a post-secondary educational facility with eight campuses in the Toronto area, has also been active in making its buildings and courses more accessible for students with disabilities.

The Accessible Customer Service Standard is the first standard to be developed under the province's Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), which was passed in 2005. The AODA's goal is to make Ontario accessible by 2025 through the development of province-wide enforceable standards on accessibility for people with disabilities. All organizations that provide goods or services to the public and which have at least one employee, will be covered by the customer service standard.

With one in seven Ontarians living with a disability and that number increasing each year, there is a growing realization that this is a market no organization can afford to overlook. According to an RBC Financial Group study, people with disabilities account for an estimated $25 billion a year in consumer spending in Canada and influence the spending decisions of twelve to fifteen million other Canadians.

In response to the growing demand for increased accessibility, the Shaw Festival (**www.shawfest.com**) has made a number of accommodations for patrons with disabilities including an accessible ticket window, wide aisles in the theatres with extra room provided for visitors who use wheelchairs, a complimentary ticket for visitors with visual impairments who require a support person, and assistive listening devices for visitors who have difficulty hearing the performances.

During the regular season, the festival also offers full performances of some of their most popular shows entirely in sign language for patrons who are Deaf or hard of hearing. Organizations such as the Canadian Hearing Society help to organize audiences for these unique performances and they are regularly sold out.

Training has been done with front-line staff to ensure that they are aware of different accessibility requirements that guests may have, as well as how to help guests benefit from the different accessibility accommodations such as the assistive listening devices. In 2007, the Audience Sales and Services Management Team and front-line staff underwent a training session on diversity and how to use inclusive language. Parking staff have been trained on how to handle situations where people need

assistance getting in and out of their cars.

Customer reaction has been positive to the efforts at improving accessibility. According to Susan Benton, Audience Services Director at the Shaw Festival, "Patrons are very happy with the special access seating at the Festival Theatre and often comment on the effectiveness of the assistive listening devices." Benton also says that they have noticed an increase in the number of visitors using the assistive listening devices and, in response, they have actually purchased more of the devices for each of their three theatres.

At Seneca College (**www.senecac.on.ca**), an accessible elevator was added at one campus and more accessible washrooms and parking have been installed in recent years. The College's website has been revised to include more accessibility features and a number of programs and services have been developed for students with disabilities which can help them to fulfil their educational goals.

For faculty, the Resolution, Equity and Diversity Centre (REC) has drafted a set of tips and checklists, which now appear in the annual Faculty Guide, on how to run a more accessible classroom. The REC acknowledged that various concerns regarding accessibility were brought to their attention by students and faculty with disabilities. In an effort to reach out to a larger group, and receive greater feedback, the REC developed the Community Barrier Identification Form. The form allows all students and employees at the College to easily identify and report any perceived barriers that may need to be corrected.

Student leaders are also included in training so that they will have a better understanding of what it means to work with and accommodate students with disabilities.

Kim Raymer, Acting Manager of Diversity in the REC, says that although the College has made great strides, there is still more work to be done. "Education is about improvement so we're always looking to move forward. We really examine our environment from that place; what can we do to ensure that our environment – regardless of whether it's physical or policy-based – is inclusive?"

For more information on how and when to comply with the Accessible Customer Service standard, visit **www.AccessON.ca** . Launched in January 2008, **www.AccessON.ca/compliance** provides tools and resources that can help everyone ensure that they are meeting their obligations under the new standard.

You can also direct your questions to the AODA Contact Centre at ServiceOntario:

Toll Free: 1 866 515-2025
TTY: 416-325-3408
TTY: Toll-free: 1-800-268-7095
Fax: 416-325-3407

US TEITAC Report Released

On April 3, the Telecommunications and Electronic and Information Technology Advisory Committee (TEITAC) presented its report (**www.access-board.gov/sec508/refresh/report/**) to the (US) Access Board on updating accessibility criteria for information and communication technologies. The report recommends revisions to the Board's standards for electronic and information technology covered by Section 508 of the US Rehabilitation Act. It also addresses updates to guidelines for telecommunications products issued by the Board under Section 255 of the US Telecommunications Act. Mary Frances Laughton of ADIO was a member of TEITAC, with Chuck Letourneau of Starling Access Services as her alternate. Canada was one of the 4 international members of the TEITAC, the others being Australia, Japan and the European Union.

"We firmly believe that the recommendations of this report will lead to new versions of the standards and guidelines that comprehensively cover accessibility in a dynamic and innovative marketplace," stated Mike Paciello of the Paciello Group who co-chaired the committee. Co-chair Jim Tobias of Inclusive Technologies concurred, noting that "this committee, through the incredible range of expertise and talent it enlisted, indeed rose to the challenge and was not shy in confronting a host of complex issues before it."

In their deliberations, committee members addressed a range of issues, including new or convergent technologies, market forces and international harmonization. Recognizing the importance of standardization across markets worldwide, the committee coordinated its work with other standard-setting bodies in the U.S. and abroad.

The report puts forth a revised set of performance criteria that describe access capabilities for products generally. The committee organized these provisions to serve as a framework for supplementary technical specifications that have been updated to address hardware, user interfaces and electronic content, audio-visual players, displays and content, real-time voice communication and authoring tools. Unlike the current Section 508 standards, these provisions are organized by the features or capabilities of a product, instead of discreet product types. The recommendations contain advisory and background information on the performance

and technical provisions, including references to related standards and updated defined terms and provisions covering documentation, support and maintenance. The report also advises the Board on considerations for future updates, supplementary guidance materials and tools, compliance testing and further research.

The Board will propose updates to the Section 508 standards and telecommunications guidelines based on its review of the report. The Board's proposal will be made available for public comment. Additional information is available on the Board's Section 508 Update webpage **www.access-board.gov/sec508/update-index.htm** . For further information,contact Tim Creagan at: **creagan@access-board.gov**, 202-272-0016 (v) or 202-272-0082 (TTY).

Postponement of Next Issue of Accessible News

The next issue of Accessible News will be a combined summer/fall edition. This is because our editor, Deb Finn, is taking on a secondment with the Canadian Transportation Agency. She will return to Industry Canada this fall. In the meantime, please continue to use our email address of **adio@crc.ca** to contact the Assistive Devices Industry Office.

News Bits

Congratulations to Vancouver's PDG Product Design Group, whose Fuze T50 Wheelchair was awarded the 2008 Medical Design Excellence Award in the category Rehabilitation and Assistive-technology Products. The award was announced on April 14. The Medical Design Excellence Awards competition is organized and presented by Canon Communications LLC (Los Angeles) and sponsored by Medical Device & Diagnostic Industry (MD&DI)) magazine and it is the premier awards program exclusively recognizing contributions and advances in the design of medical products. PDG has also announced the launch of on-line ordering from its web site. Visitors to the site can do their own quotes and place orders on-line on the PDG web site **www.pdgmobility.com/PDG-Wheelchair-Specs/index.html** . Simply go to the chair page you are interested in, click on either the "Quotation" or "On-Line Order" icon and check off the features you need for your chair. For quotations, print the quote and fax to PDG with your Purchase Order. To place an order, click "Submit" and your order is sent to PDG's Customer Service Team. They will promptly acknowledge your order via email.

Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario's Desire2Learn Inc., a leading provider of mission-critical enterprise eLearning solutions, announced on February 5 that Washington School for the Deaf (WSD), a K-12 state-funded school and education center for

students who are deaf or hard of hearing in the U.S. state of Washington, has adopted the Desire2Learn solution to provide a robust, flexible learning environment for many students with hearing loss. Key factors in the decision included a variety of interactive components found in the Desire2Learn solution, such as the ability to chat, easily store information, and include video streaming. In addition, the flexible approach to training and individualized support services matched the diverse needs of the agency. Desire2Learn will enable WSD to achieve their goals of providing direct instruction to students from certified teachers of the deaf/hard of hearing, regardless of where students live. WSD plans to provide courses related to a variety of subjects and age groups. The unique nature of online learning provides an opportunity to include skilled professionals from around the state who can share their abilities with students who desperately need the support. Designed to meet the unique needs of districts, teachers, parents and students, the Desire2Learn solution enables K-12 education providers to easily and efficiently manage numerous schools, courses, professional development programs and other specialized programs. Desire2Learn supports over five million learners worldwide and clients include higher education K-12, as well as associations, government, and other leading organizations. For more information, visit: **www.Desire2Learn.com** or call 1-888-772-0325.

Ottawa's Afforda Speech is now shipping its new KeyboardCommunicator Model KC200 (**www.affordaspeech.com/KC200.htm**). KeyboardCommunicator was first demonstrated at ATIA from January 30 to February 2 this year in Orlando, Florida. It is a compact (22x18x4 cm) and portable (0.5 Kg) type-to-talk Speech Generating Device (SGD). Based on the industry standard DECtalk speech synthesizer, KeyboardCommunicator features 9 voices and speaks in letter mode, word mode and sentence mode. KeyboardCommunicator's mini-keyboard can be detached to allow you to plug in your own PS/2 keyboard. It can be used by students as a typing communication device. Autistic children can use it as a simple augmentative communication device and its extreme ease of use makes it ideal for non-speaking adults and seniors with little or no computer skills. KeyboardCommunicator can operate from disposable or rechargeable batteries. It has a backlit LCD and a self-contained amplified speaker. For more information, please email **info@affordaspeech.com** or call toll-free 1-888-866-1668.

Toronto-based Dignity Transportation Inc. (**www.dignitytransportation.com**), Southern Ontario's largest service provider for those with special needs, has their most unique vehicle yet: an eight-passenger wheel chair accessible limousine, the only such vehicle in North America. Dignity Transportation, the first company to offer wheelchair accessible taxis in Toronto, was founded in 1990 and is today a major contributor to the services provided by the Toronto Transit Commission, supplying approximately 25% of their needs for wheelchair accessible vehicles to the Wheel-Trans service division. Dignity also provides vehicles under contract to York Region Transit Mobility Plus for the provision of their accessible service. Recently,

the company was awarded a major contract in Winnipeg to service their Handi-Transit for both accessible and sedan service. Lloyd Pollock, Dignity President, stated that: "Dignity has always been at the forefront in training and transportation for all those with special needs. We were the first of the Toronto taxi companies to put full size vans on the road to accommodate larger and multiple wheelchairs and scooters. Recognizing that there was still a demand for even larger vehicles the company added on wheelchair accessible buses. The next progression was a natural for us. We are extremely proud to announce that once again Dignity is out front with the first of its kind in North America: a truly luxurious wheelchair accessible limousine." For more information, contact Frank Tizel, Director Sales & Tours, Dignity Transportation Inc. by email at: **franktizel@dignitytransportation.com** tel: (Toronto:) 416-398-2109 ext. 230 (York Region:) 905-470-2399 (Toll Free:) 1-866-398-2109 ext. 230 fax: 905-470-5924.

On April 14, AbleNet Incorporated, an American AT company, announced its acquisition of Tash International, the Ajax, Ontario-based company with a stronghold in the areas of physical therapy, rehabilitation and daily living. "Including Tash products in the AbleNet family of products is a win-win situation. Tash brings an outstanding combination of products that enhance our capacity to deliver the best and broadest assortment of assistive technology solutions to persons with disabilities by way of the educational, physical therapy, rehabilitation and daily living assistive technology markets," stated AbleNet CEO Jen Thalhuber. Commenting on the acquisition, Colin Wheeler, owner and CEO of Tash International Inc., said, "I am delighted at the prospect of passing the baton to AbleNet. I firmly believe Tash International is in good hands and better positioned to create new opportunities, to open new markets and to serve more persons with disabilities."

On April 14th CNIB launched a new online web-store, which will provide added exposure to CNIB and its consumer products. In preparation for the launch CNIB created a new, exciting and more complete catalogue that will feature all of their retail merchandise. The catalogue will be approximately 150 pages long and will be published in English and French versions. CNIB plans to print 40,000 copies which will be distributed to individuals, retirement residences, other not-for-profit organizations and through various other distribution channels, as well as appearing on the CNIB website in various formats. This catalogue will be current for 12 months but will circulate for a considerably longer period. New products and price rollbacks will be also included in the catalogue to generate added interest. A copy of the current catalogue can be viewed at:
www.cnib.ca/en/services/products/useful-products/product-catalogue/CNIB2007Eng_May2.pdf

On May 1, the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres (CAILC) took on a new name. The organization's new name is Independent Living Canada (ILC) and they will continue to function as a national umbrella organization working to empower people with disabilities and to remove barriers so that responsible, self-reliant people with disabilities can assume risks, make choices and contribute as they wish. For more information, visit the ILC web site at: **www.ilcanada.ca** .

On April 21, Canada Post (**www.canadapost.ca**) issued its first-ever Canadian Braille stamp featuring Guide Dogs. The domestic-rate stamp has the denomination in both print and in Braille. The stamp was issued to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the Montreal Association for the Blind which is also being recognized with a Commemorative Envelope. Designers Stephen Boake and Andrew Perro of Toronto's Designwerke sought to keep the stamp's design simple and give prominence to the dog in order to reinforce the intimate connection to the human partner. The yellow Labrador Retriever on the stamp is a Canine Vision Dog Guide from Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides. The addition of Braille created various printing challenges, as did the increase in font size of the denomination, another incorporated element to assist vision-impaired individuals. Additionally, the text on the stamp booklet and Official First Day cover were printed in a larger than usual typeface in respect for the needs of individuals with varying degrees of vision impairment. The self-adhesive 52-cent stamp measures 38 mm x 27 mm (horizontal) and is sold in booklets of ten.

More than twenty-five countries have now ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This means that the Convention will come into force on May 12. On May 2, Parliament gave unanimous approval to a motion for Canada to ratify this ground-breaking Convention.

On February 19, it was announced that Mr. Monthian Buntan, a well known active player on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the President of the Thailand Association of the Blind was to be named a Senator in the Government of Thailand.

Upcoming Conferences in Canada

Here's what's happening in Canada between May 1 and November 30, 2008. Please note that the language in each of the following entries is the language in which the conference was submitted to the conference list:

May 9-10, 2008
Connections 2008, Resource Fair for Persons with Disabilities
Mississauga, Ontario
Contact: Matthew Fleet, c/o Coalition for Persons with Disabilities
10 Kingsbridge Garden Circle, Ste. 300
Mississauga, ON L5R 3K6
Tel: 905-890-0140, Ext. 24
E-mail: **coalition.pwd@sympatico.ca**

May 12, 2008
3rd Annual CADA Conference - Aging in the Home
Toronto, Ontario
Contact: Richard W. Taylor
Tel: 416-480-9420
WWW: **www.cadaonline.ca**

June 6-7, 2008
People in Motion 2008
Toronto, Ontario
Contact: People in Motion
PO Box 147, Port Severn, Ontario L0K 1S0
Tel: 1-877-745-6555
Fax: 705-538-1988
E-mail: **sales@people-in-motion.com**
WWW: **www.people-in-motion.com**

July 2-6, 2008
CHHA - IFHOH, Congress 2008
Vancouver, British Columbia
Tel: 1-800-263-8068
E-mail: **congress2008@chha.ca**
WWW: **www.chha-ifhohcongress2008.com/**

July 7-10, 2008
Vision 2008, 9th International Conference on Low Vision
Montreal, Quebec
Contact: Secretariat of the 9th International Conference on Low Vision
Opus3 Inc.
417 saint-Pierre Street, Suite 203
Montreal Quebec H2Y 2M4
Tel: 514-395-1808
FAX: 514-395-1801
E-mail: **vision2008@opus3.com**
WWW: **www.vision2008.ca**

August 2-7, 2008
Conference of the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC)
Montreal, Quebec
Contact: ISAAC 2008 Conference Secretariat - JPdL
1555 Peel, Suite 500
Montreal, Quebec H3A 3L8
Tel: 514-287-1070
FAX: 514-287-1248
E-mail: **isaac2008@jpdl.com**
WWW: **www.isaac2008.org/**

August 25-28, 2008
21st RI World Congress
Quebec City, Quebec
Contact: Rehabilitation International (RI)
WWW: **www.riquebec2008.org**

September 1 - 4, 2008
Third ICOH-WOPS International Conference "Psychosocial Factors at Work: From Knowledge to Action"
Quebec City, Quebec
Contact:
Faculty of Medicine, Université Laval
WWW: **www.icoh-wops2008.com**

September 4-7, 2008
Expo Ageing & Design
Montreal, Quebec
Contact: Ageing Design Montréal
4398, Boul. St-Laurent, Suite 302
Montreal, Quebec, H2W 1Z5
Tel: 514 387 8859
FAX: 514 396 3378
E-mail: **info@vdm-adm.ca**
WWW: **www.ageingdesignmontreal.ca/en/page.php**

October 5-7, 2008
Employment Now! (Diversity Planning for Inclusive Employment)
St. John's, Newfoundland
Contact: Carole J. Barron
The Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW)
401-111 Richmond Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2G4
Tel: Toll Free: 1 800-664-0925 x222 or 416-260-3060 x222
FAX: 416-260-3093
TTY: 416-260-9223
E-mail: **cjbarron@ccrw.org**
WWW: **www.ccrw.org**

October 13-15, 2008
Tenth International ACM SIGACCESS Conference on Computers and Accessibility
Halifax, Nova Scotia
Contact: General Chair: Simon Harper
The University of Manchester (UK)
E-mail: **gc-assets08@sigaccess.org**
WWW: **www.acm.org/sigaccess/assets08/**

November 6 - 8, 2008
Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation: Innovation, Impact and Future Directions
Toronto, Ontario
Tel: 416-597-3422 ext.3693
E-mail: **conferences@torontorehab.on.ca**
WWW: **www.torontorehab.com/education/scic08abstracts.htm**

November 14-16, 2008
NEADS National Conference 2008 - Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow
Ottawa, Ontario
Contact: Frank Smith
E-mail: **frank.smith@NEADS.ca**
WWW: **www.neads.ca**

For more conference listings, including what's coming up in other countries, see the "Calendar of Events in Disability, Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology " link on the ADIO web site: **www.at-links.gc.ca/as/zx20000E.asp** . This is also the link you should use to submit your conferences (Canadian or international) for inclusion in the listings.

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **www.at-links.gc.ca**. At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from ADIO

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Deb Finn or Mary Frances Laughton
Assistive Devices Industry Office
Industry Canada
P.O. Box 11490 Station H
Ottawa, Ontario
K2H 8S2

tel: 613-990-4297 or 613-990-4316
fax: 613-998-5923
TTY: 613-998-3288
email: **adio@crc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Industry Canada Industrie Canada

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

Spring 2009

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 36

LIBRARY
JUL 10 2009
University of Toronto

T-Base Communications Acquires CNIB's Autobill Service

On February 10, T-Base Communications (**www.tbase.com**) and CNIB (**www.cnib.ca**) announced the signing of an agreement under which T-Base will acquire CNIB's Autobill technology and assume immediate responsibility for the continued delivery of alternative format statements for CNIB's Autobill clients.

With the acquisition of CNIB's Autobill program, blind, deafblind and partially sighted consumers unable to read conventional print are assured access to the most secure, private, and reliable alternative format reporting available in the market today.

"We see this as a very positive development for CNIB and our Autobill customers," said Margaret McGrory, Vice-President, Information Systems and CIO and Managing Director, CNIB Library. When CNIB embarked upon the Autobill project, it was to fill an important void in the market. The emergence of world-class companies such as T-Base to serve this market need is great news for CNIB's commercial customers. "This will allow the CNIB Library to re-focus on its core business — ensuring a sustainable alternative format collection and library service for persons with print disabilities" added McGrory.

This type of venture is not new to T-Base, which works closely with several not-for-profit organizations to offer secure statement processing more broadly, providing quality and timely delivery of sensitive, personal consumer information in alternative formats. "We are thrilled to add CNIB to this list of such relationships," stated Sharlyn Ayotte, President and CEO of T-Base. "Our business reach, scale, and growing customer list ensures that this vital service is available to all blind and partially sighted consumers across Canada, regardless of who they bank with or which telecommunication or utility service provider they may choose."

May is Spinal Cord Injury and CPA Awareness Month

For almost seven decades, The Canadian Paraplegic Association (CPA: **www.canparaplegic.org**) has been delivering peer support assistance to Canadians with disabilities arising from spinal cord injuries.

Throughout the month of May, CPA will hold a number of events across Canada to build disability and accessibility awareness of the impact of spinal cord injury (SCI) and of the CPA(s activities and services, starting with a signature event on

Parliament Hill. Several Members of Parliament and Senators will spend May 7 in wheelchairs, conducting their normal working day while making time allowances for simple things like finding wheelchair accessible shuttles and washrooms. They will be allowed to leave their chair while in the House of Commons, because there is only one wheelchair accessible spot on the floor, for the Parliament Hill Event Co-Sponsor, the Honourable Steven Fletcher.

On the morning of May 7, the Human Resources, Skills Development and Status of Persons with Disabilities Committee will receive presentations on poverty and disability, with the CPA presenting on poverty as it affects people with spinal cord injuries. Later in the day, MPs and special celebrities will take part in wheelchair races in front of Parliament Hill, starting with a manual wheelchair race that will feature Chantal Benoit from the Canadian Women(s Paralympic Basketball team and Steven Daniel from the Canadian National Adaptive Rowing team. Minister Fletcher, who uses a head controlled motorized wheelchair, has also issued a challenge to MP Justin Trudeau and CPA Ontario(s Peer Support Coordinator, Madelyn Scanlan, to a motorized race.

For details on events taking place across the country to mark SCI and CPA Awareness Month, visit the CPA web site.

Canadian Transportation Agency Releases Guide for Travellers with Disabilities

On March 30, the Canadian Transportation Agency released the new publication "Take Charge of Your Travel" at its Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting in Ottawa.

This free guide provides information for persons with disabilities that will help plan their travel and make it easier to get from point A to point B. It describes accessible services and features for travellers with disabilities who use airplanes and trains, as well as passenger ferries and buses that cross a Canadian or provincial border.

"The guide is going to help travellers with disabilities take charge by anticipating and addressing the challenges that travel can present," said the Agency's Chair and CEO Geoff Hare.

"Take Charge of Your Travel" replaces the Agency's popular guide to accessible air travel, of which the Agency has distributed over 60,000 copies. The new guide will better meet the needs of more travellers since it now covers all federally-regulated modes of transportation. The content of the guide was developed in consultation with representatives from associations of persons with disabilities and the transportation industry.

It has been organized in a reader-friendly way by taking the reader from start to finish of a trip and is written in plain language. Other features are the "useful information sources" section, a key words index for quick and easy searches, and a detachable "Reservation Checklist" tool. The Checklist sets out some 60 possible services relating to travel such as accessible seating, requesting assistance, and service animal information. It can be used by travellers, travel agents and transportation service providers to plan trips and ensure that accessibility needs are met.

The release of "Take Charge of Your Travel" is one of a recent series of significant achievements in the area of accessible transportation. For example, the Agency has produced five codes of practice on accessibility, the most recent focussing on passenger terminals and which will come into effect in June. All five codes are now supported by a new Agency monitoring methodology with a view to fostering greater industry compliance with their provisions. The Agency has also issued major decisions on undue obstacles to mobility, such as its "one person, one fare" ruling regarding persons with disabilities who require additional seating on domestic flights operated by Air Canada and WestJet, and its final judgment on the use of medical oxygen by some persons in order to travel by air.

The Agency is undertaking a distribution of the guide to the transportation industry, travel agencies and associations of persons with disabilities. The guide is available in both official languages, online through the Agency's Web site, and in multiple formats upon request.

For copies of "Take Charge of Your Travel" and the "Reservation Checklist", please contact the Agency:

Canadian Transportation Agency
Ottawa, ON K1A 0N9
Tel.: 1-888-222-2592
Fax: 819-997-6727
TTY: 1-800-669-5575
Web: **www.cta.gc.ca**
Email: **info@otc-cta.gc.ca**

New Products or Services

Since the last issue of Accessible News, a number of Canadian companies have announced the launch of new products, new versions of existing products or launched new Web sites. Here's a brief summary. The companies have been presented in alphabetical order.

HumanWare (**www.humanware.com**) and ReadHowYouWant are partnering to help readers who have a visual impairment to find the book reading device and format that's right for their needs. ReadHowYouWant offers thousands of books in accessible formats, including 24pt. large print, braille and DAISY files and HumanWare makes and sells playback devices that can be used with braille or DAISY files, including the Victor Reader line of book readers. As of April, readers will be able to go to the HumanWare website to download free, first chapters of 20 bestselling ReadHowYouWant titles each month as part of the "Free Chapter Download Program". The first chapters are from popular adult and young adult books from a variety of well-known publishers including Wiley, Random House Australia, Murdoch Books and Weekly Reader. After enjoying the complimentary first chapter, readers may visit ReadHowYouWant's website at www.readhowyouwant.com to purchase the entire file.

Stoveguard International (**www.save-on-security.com**) has now begun delivery of its Stove Guard device for gas stoves. This is the first such product designed to prevent fires caused by accidentally leaving a burner on and unattended on a gas range and joins the company's Stove Guard for electric ranges, which is already popular in the marketplace. For more information, visit the Stoveguard web site, call them in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan at 306-931-3707 or email them at: **sales@save-on-security.com** .

Upcoming Conferences in Canada

Here's what's happening in Canada between May 1 and June 30, 2009. Please note that the language in each of the following entries is the language in which the conference was submitted to the conference list:

May 1 - 2, 2009
Louis Braille: From Literacy to Liberty 2009
- CANADIAN FEDERATION OF THE BLIND CONVENTION
Victoria, British Columbia, CANADA
Contact: Canadian Federation of the Blind
Tel: 250-598-7154 or 1-800-619-8798 (toll-free)
E-mail: **info@cfb.ca**
WWW: **www.cfb.ca/**

May 1-3, 2009
Inclusion Today
- Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians National Conference
New Westminster, British Columbia, CANADA
Contact: Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians
Tel: 1-800-561-4774
E-mail: **info@blindcanadians.ca**
WWW: **www.blindcanadians.ca**

May 21-24, 2009
2009 CHHA Conference & AGM
St. John's, Newfoundland, CANADA
Contact: National Office
Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
205-2415 Holly Lane,
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1V 7P2
Tel: 1-800-263-8068 or 613-526-1584
FAX: 613-526-4718
E-mail: **conference@chha.ca**
WWW: **chha.ca/index2.php**

May 22-23, 2009
Pathways - Learning Disabilities Conference
Sudbury, Ontario, CANADA
Contact: Marlene McIntosh
Cambrian College
The Glenn Crombie Centre
1400 Barrydowne Road
Sudbury, ON P3A 3V8
Tel: 705-566-8101 x 7219
FAX: 705-566-5452
E-mail: **marlene.mcintosh@cambriancollege.ca**
WWW: **homepages.cambrianc.on.ca/gcc/pathways**

May 25-26, 2009
2009 Canadian Disability Studies Association Conference
Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA
Contact: Canadian Disability Studies Association
-Association Canadienne des Études sur l'Incapacité
E-mail: **cdsa.acei@gmail.com**
WWW: **www.cdsa-acei.ca/conference2009.html** (English)
WWW: **www.cdsa-acei.ca/conf.html** (French)

June 4-6, 2009
Bringing the Pieces Together
- BC Association for Community Living's Conference and AGM.
Victoria, BC, CANADA
Contact: Karla Verschoor
227 - 6th Street,
New Westminster, BC, V3L 3A5
Tel: 604-777-9100
FAX: 604-777-9394
E-mail: **kverschoor@bcacl.org**
WWW: **www.bcacl.org**

June 10, 2009
Creating an accessible community: Let's Plan for It!
Sudbury, Ontario, CANADA
Contact: Natasha James
The Enterprise Centre, Cambrian College
1400 Barrydowne Road
Sudbury, ON P3A 3V8
Tel: 705-524-7391
FAX: 705-566-5492
TTY: 705-560-1889
E-mail: **natasha.james@cambriancollege.ca**
WWW: **www.theenterprisecentre.com/accessibility_conf.htm**

News Bits

In July, 2008, Surrey, B.C.'s Cougar Mountain Marketing Corporation was awarded the Daily Living prize at the AUTONOMIC'Innov 2008 trade show in Paris, France for their TeleStik(R) Portable Reacher. This extendable reacher is designed for use by those with limited hand strength, including people with MS, arthritis and some degree of quadriplegia. The goal of AUTONOMIC'Innov is to promote new assistive technologies for people with disabilities and older adults to users, professionals and the media. To find out more about TeleStik, visit the Cougar Mountain Marketing web site at **www.telestik.com** .

In January, the Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments (**GAATES: www.gaates.org**) announced that the publication, "International Best Practices in Universal Design: A Global Review" was named as one of the world's "100 Best Practices" for 2008 by the United Nations — Habitat - Dubai International Award for Best Practices. In a press release marking the Dubai Award GAATES, a Canadian based NGO, noted that this publication has been distributed to more than 5,000 people worldwide and its comparative data on accessibility codes

and standards from around the world have been used by such international donor organizations as the World Bank to ensure that the built environment is accessible and usable by everyone, including people with disabilities. The document was funded by a consortium of Canadian and International organizations, led in Canada by the Canadian Human Rights Commission. It is available in English, French, Arabic, Spanish, Serbian and in the alternate DAISY format.

The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (**LDAC: www.ldac-acta.ca**) launched its new web site for students with learning disabilities at an event at Carleton University in Ottawa on March 24. The site, **www.youth2youth.ca** provides students who have learning disabilities with the information they need to achieve success in their education and work lives. It helps them understand their learning profiles and provides them with strategies to communicate their learning needs so that they can obtain necessary accommodations and supports. The web site has three main sections: Getting Here, which explores the challenges students with learning disabilities face in preparing for post-secondary studies; Being Here, which examines their strategies for adapting to post-secondary life; and Moving On, which explains the next steps in making the transition to work life.

In April, Motion Specialties Incorporated and March of Dimes Canada announced the launch of a new program called MODmobility(R). It's an on-line store where people can donate and purchase accessibility devices. Please visit the website at **www.modmobility.ca** to learn more about this exciting program.

Also in April, the Canadian Abilities Foundation announced the launch of a new on-line job board to assist workers with disabilities in finding employment. This initiative, which has been undertaken in partnership with the Workopolis NicheNetwork is called jobs.abilities.ca (**http://jobs.abilities.ca**) and is open both to employers who wish to fill positions in their organizations and to job seekers who are looking for employers who value diversity, equity and accessibility in the workplace.

Congratulations to Mary Frances Laughton, the recently-retired Chief of the Assistive Devices Industry Office at Industry Canada. She has been named as one of this year's recipients of the Public Service Award of Excellence, in the Outstanding Career category. The award will be presented on June 18, as part of the National Public Service Week observances.

Ottawa-based web specialists Further Ahead have launched into their 2009 workshop series. Derek Featherstone, founder and owner of Further Ahead will present his workshop "Real World Accessibility for Ajax and Web Apps", in Ottawa on June 15. This workshop is for those in the public sector who are working towards or are considering moving their service applications online. The full-day workshop is filled with practical tips and demonstrations of development and design techniques and testing strategies for all members of a project team and will provide participants

concepts, strategies and code that will help them provide their services online to citizens of all abilities. More information on the workshop can be found at: **http://furtherahead.com/workshops/ottawa2009/** .

ATIA, the Assistive Technology Industry Association (**www.atia.org**) has announced its first-ever conference in Chicago, Illinois, to be held this October. This is in addition to the annual ATIA conference which takes place in Orlando, Florida every January. The Chicago event will be held at the Renaissance Schaumburg Hotel and Convention Center. A day of pre-conference seminars will be held on October 28 and the conference itself runs from October 29-31. For more information, visit the ATIA web site or email them at mailto:atia@atia.org.

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **www.at-links.gc.ca**. At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from Us

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Deb Finn
Industry Canada
300 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0C8

tel: 613-990-4297
fax: 613-957-4076
TTY: 613-998-5923
email: **deb.finn@ic.gc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Industry Canada Industrie Canada

Government Publications

Assistive Devices Industry Office (ADIO)

Summer 2009

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 37

CRTC Takes Steps to Improve Access to Communications Services for Canadians

On July 21, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC: **www.crtc.gc.ca**) announced new requirements to facilitate access to telecommunications and broadcasting services. The requirements build on existing initiatives and consist of concrete measures for the more than four million Canadians living with disabilities. While certain measures will be implemented immediately, others will be put into practice gradually given the current economic climate.

"We understand that Canadians living with disabilities have increasing needs as communications technologies become more prevalent in our daily lives," said Konrad von Finckenstein, Q.C., Chairman of the CRTC. "The measures announced today (Broadcasting and Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2009-430) are an important step in making it easier for them to use the latest communications services."

Given the increasingly converged nature of the communications industry, the Commission examined accessibility issues as they relate to both broadcasting and telecommunications services.

Regarding telecommunications services and further to its review, the CRTC will:

– require that telephone companies offer a new service that will allow an operator to convert text messages sent over the Internet into voice calls, and vice versa (known as Internet Protocol relay, this service is used by persons who are deaf or hard of hearing to communicate)

– require that telecommunications companies, including cable and satellite companies, improve the accessibility of their customer service

– request that wireless companies offer at least one type of cellphone to serve the needs of people who are blind and/or have moderate-to-severe mobility or cognitive disabilities, and

– investigate possible improvements to 911 services for Canadians with hearing or speech disabilities.

LIBRARY JUN 22 2010 UNIVERSITY OF

Canada

During its next licence-renewal exercise, the CRTC will require that broadcasters:
– improve and monitor the quality of closed captioning, and develop standards for its delivery in digital and high-definition signals

– make available high-quality audio descriptions of programming, especially for news broadcasts (audio descriptions provide Canadians with visual impairments with voice-overs of the text or graphics that appear on-screen, such as weather updates, sports scores or financial data), and

– provide at least four hours per week of described-video programming (described video is added during pauses in dialogue to provide information on the settings, the actors' costumes or body language, or other purely visual information).

For the first time, the CRTC's requirements for described video will apply to French-language broadcasters, as well as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's English- and French-language networks. This will result in the provision of described video by a minimum of 15 additional English-language and five additional French-language television services.

The announcement follows a public process that included a public hearing, which was held from November 17 to 26, 2008. Dr. Gary Birch, the Executive Director of the Neil Squire Society (**www.neilsquire.ca**) was one of the presenters at that hearing. Commenting on the CRTC decision, Dr. Birch said, "We look forward to working with the cell phone service providers to ensure they have accessible handset devices across the full range of persons with disabilities; however, the CRTC's rulings did not address several significant issues that were raised by the disability community during the hearings."

"In particular, the need for resources for community-based disability groups to be effectively involved in the ongoing process of creating accessibility resulting directly and indirectly from these hearings was not addressed. This is essential to ensure users with disabilities are appropriately involved in making current and emerging technologies and services accessible for all persons with disabilities. The CRTC has made an important step forward in addressing the needs of people with disabilities, but a properly funded and formal ongoing engagement process is necessary to ensure that people with disabilities are not left behind as new technologies and services are introduced."

Dr. Birch added, "We will continue to work with the CRTC, industry and other community-based organizations to continue the work of developing a funding model and putting it into place. This will enable the required level of effort to ensure that Canadians with disabilities can achieve and maintain full access to telecommunication and broadcast technologies."

Idea rolls to success

Motion Composites, a small company founded by a pair of young university graduates in Saint-Roche-de-l'Achigan, Quebec has begun manufacturing the world's only collapsible wheelchair made entirely of high-performance composite materials.

Éric Simoneau and David Gingras were still in university when they began putting together their business plan, which earned them some 10 bursaries and honours, among them the coveted $30,000 Pierre-Péladeau Bursary. After four years of development, their product, Hélio, now ranks among the items covered by the Régie de l'assurance-maladie du Québec, the provincial health insurance plan.

"Our wheelchair helps considerably improve the quality of life of its users," noted Éric Simoneau. "Forty percent lighter than conventional wheelchairs, it is far easier to operate and a piece of cake to fold up and store in a vehicle."

When it came time to acquire manufacturing equipment and to put their first commercialization strategy into effect, the two entrepreneurs knocked on Canada Economic Development's door. There, they received guidance on the Agency's programs and the steps they needed to take to get to the ultimate stage of opening their manufacturing plant. Thanks to CED's technical and financial support, Motion Composites was able to pursue the development, manufacture and commercialization of this innovative new product.

"We were fortunate to have the support of experts skilled in regional economic development. While we know we have a good product, our success also stems from the assistance we were able to obtain from Canada Economic Development and others," concluded David Gingras.

The fifteen employees specializing in the manufacture of composite parts are now seeing their order books fill up. Thus, only a few months after introducing its wheelchair to the market, Motion Composites has already had to up its annual sales forecasts to a projected $3 million over the next three years. Clearly, this company is rolling toward success. To find out more about Motion Composites' products, visit their web site at: **www.motioncomposites.com** .

Quillsoft Funds AAC Research

On June 17, Dr. Fraser Shein, President and CEO of Toronto-based Quillsoft Ltd. (**www.wordq.com**), announced a donation of $100,000 to Bloorview Kids Foundation. This donation will fund post-doctoral research to advance augmentative and alternative communication for persons with disabilities and further the

development of highly qualified personnel at Bloorview Kids Rehab. This donation is being matched by The Holland Family Matching Fund Challenge which will support Bloorview in other areas of need. Quillsoft shares the perspective of the Holland Family that during these tough economic times, it is important to invest in helping children with disabilities to ensure that they are not put at risk.

Researchers at Bloorview lead in many technological innovations that enhance the lives of people with disabilities. Dr. Shein said "this is the first step in my plan to establish a new Canada Research Chair in Augmentative and Alternative Communication at Bloorview."

Quillsoft arose as a commercialization effort from ongoing research and development at Bloorview. Today, the company is a leading developer and provider of writing software that enables both children and adults with various learning and physical disabilities to effectively compete with their peers. In Ontario alone, over 100,000 students use Quillsoft software to help them in their writing.

Quillsoft has received support in the past from several government agencies including htx.ca - The Health Exchange, NRC-IRAP, and the Ontario Centres of Excellence, which contributed towards the cost of researching and developing its current products. Through their donation to Bloorview, Quillsoft sets an example of stimulating new research and innovation, especially in areas where funding is difficult to obtain.

T-Base CEO Honoured for Her Entrepreneurial Vision by CATA Women in Technology Forum

On May 20, Sharlyn Ayotte, President and CEO of T-Base Communications (**www.tbase.com**) received the prestigious Sara Kirke Award for Woman Entrepreneurship at the CATA Alliance Annual Innovation Gala. Sharlyn was selected by CATA's Women in Technology (WIT) Forum as this year's award recipient, which recognizes top women in their field who have demonstrated the most outstanding technological innovation and corporate leadership.

As a blind entrepreneur, Sharlyn inspired the technology behind T-Base, which provides organizations with alternate format, (braille, large print, e-Text and audio), statements and documents in order to meet the diverse information needs of their aging, blind, deafblind and partially sighted customers. Initially employed within the high-tech industry, Sharlyn's career path was unexpectedly redirected when she suddenly lost her sight. Resulting from her inability to decipher conventional print documents such as her monthly bills and account statements without assistance, she launched T-Base with the mission of ensuring that all blind, deafblind and partially sighted consumers are able to receive correspondence in an accessible format of

choice, and are afforded equal protection, privacy and security rights.
"In judging the nominees for the award, the Selection Committee was looking for women leaders who demonstrate consistent innovation and leadership skills, resulting in the creation and international acceptance of significant world-class products. We were thrilled that Sharlyn was chosen as this year's recipient, maintaining her vision against all odds," said Joanne Stanley, Managing Director of CATA WIT Forum.

The award was formally presented to Sharlyn by Dr. Roseann Runte, President and Vice-Chancellor of Carleton University. "I am truly honoured to have received this award, and I am very proud of the technological innovation we at T-Base have inspired that benefits so many Canadians," said Ayotte.

What's Happening at ATRC

There has been so much activity lately at the University of Toronto's Adaptive Technology Resource Centre (ATRC: **http://atrc.utoronto.ca/**) that we decided to list it all in one place:

The new version of the AChecker Web accessibility checker has been introduced as free open source software. Development of AChecker was supported by the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario. AChecker can be used to evaluate the accessibility of Web pages to be sure they are accessible to everyone. A Public Version of AChecker is available for everyone to use, or it can be downloaded and installed on a local Web server. Choose from a number of international accessibility standards when reviewing Web content. Study the guidelines associated with a standard, and the accessibility checks associated with each guideline to understand what and how AChecker checks accessibility. Author your own accessibility checks. Link AChecker into other Web applications using its Web services to add accessibility checking to your other Web-based programs. Modify the look of AChecker to create your own custom version.For more details about AChecker, and to download a copy of your own, visit the AChecker development site: **www.atutor.ca/achecker** .

The Understanding Web Accessibility online course has been developed for anyone who wants to gain expert understanding of accessibility issues, ranging from Web content authors and Web application developers to decision makers who need to know what their Web authors and programmers must do to make their Web sites accessible. The course, which was developed by ATRC in collaboration with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, focuses on the four Principles of Accessibility described in the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0). It translates the technical language of WCAG to plain language, presents a variety of simulations to help people who don't normally experience barriers experience them

first hand, and it presents a collection of strategies and techniques that content authors and application developers can use to ensure that what they create will be accessible. The course will be offered online several times during the Fall of 2009 and for Ontario residents, it's free, supported by the Ontario Government's Enabling Change Program. For more details on the course, an opportunity to preview it or to register for one of the upcoming sessions, visit the course registration site at: **www.atutor.ca/services/courses.php** .

Version 1.1 of Fluid Infusion, ATRC's application framework for building usable and accessbile user interfaces with JavaScript was released in June. Built on top of jQuery, Infusion takes a different approach to client-side development. At heart, Infusion is an open architecture designed to put you back in control of your application's user experience. It includes a growing collection of UI components, reusable interactions that go deeper than most widgets. Created by a community of developers and interaction designers, Infusion components are built from the ground up with accessibility in mind. For more information, please visit **http://fluidproject.org/index.php/Infusion** .

ATRC has also been successful in securing funding for some of its research work. A recent Ontario Research Fund Research Excellence (ORF-RE) award of nearly $2.5 million over five years has been announced for work on an international collaborative project called AEGIS. This is a European Union-funded project to create a comprehensive accessibility framework for global information and communications systems. The research will develop innovative technologies and practices to address the growing demand for accessible products and services worldwide, driven in part by the aging population. Ontario partners in the ORF-RE project, called "Project AEGIS – Integrating Accessibility into Emerging ICT" include Ryerson University, York University, University of Ontario Istitute of Technology, Sun Microsystems, Research in Motion and IBM.

In addition to the ORF-RE funding, the Inclusive Design Institute, which is led by ATRC's Jutta Treviranus, was awarded more than $8 million from the Canada Foundation for Innovation in June.

Best Practices in Accessible Media in Canadian Broadcasting

With the generous support of CTVglobemedia (CTVgm) through the CTVgm-CHUM benefits and working with Ryerson University, through its CLIME Inititaitve (Creating Liberal and Integrated Media Experience), Toronto's Mediac Inc. (**www.mediac.ca**) will monitor the provision of accessible media in Canadian broadcasting. Mediac Inc. is an accessible media research and consulting firm that supports research and development of systemic business practices to seamlessly introduce accessible media production into broadband distribution environments. To

do this, the company has established best practices for accessible media production, provides training, revenue models, strategic planning and human resource recruitment.

The project, called Monitor 2, picks up from the landmark study conducted in 1992 by the Canadian Captioning Development Agency, entitled "The Monitor Project". That study looked at closed captioning.

The Monitor 2 project will include closed captioning and the provision of audio description. Over the course of three years, random broadcast samples will be taken at the national, provincial and regional levels to measure the quality and quantity of accessibility. "Like the first study", said Mediac's Beverley Milligan, "at no time will the broadcast undertakings sampled be revealed. Rather, the selection criteria will focus on getting the most favourable results. This means, for example, at the regional level large urban centre broadcasters will be selected, where a larger consumer base might drive more and better quality of accessible media."

Samples will be taken and analyzed on two different occasions over two sweeps periods, from 10 English broadcast undertakings across Canada. Among other things, analysis will measure for volume and quality. Volume will consider CRTC program category, time of day, producers, manufacturers and marketing factors, while quality will examine style, linguistics, placement, time slots, and technology. There will also be numerous focus groups and committees established representing broadband distributors and manufacturers, government, content providers, and the disability community for feedback

Additionally, "Monitor 2: A report on best practices in the provision of accessible media in Canadian Broadcasting" will measure the environmental impact of policy, marketing, revenue models and technology 15 years after the first snapshot.

In addition to its current roster of participating organizations, Mediac is actively looking for other partners to join the project as well. Interested organizations should contact Beverley Milligan by email at **info@mediac.ca** or by post at Mediac Inc., 2 Laird Avenue, P.O. Box 51, Station R, Toronto, Ontario M4G 3Z3,
tel: 416-488-9521.

New Products or Services

Since the last issue of Accessible News, a number of Canadian companies have announced the launch of new products, new versions of existing products or launched new Web sites. Here's a brief summary. The companies have been presented in alphabetical order.

The Canadian Abilities Foundation (CAF) has launched a secure on-line store. Credit or debit cards can be used for subscriptions (new or renewals) as well as for the purchase of other CAF publications. Online donations can also be made on the site. Visit **www.abilities.ca** and follow the links marked "Subcribe", "Shop on-line" or "Donate".

The new edition of Clearing Our Path is now available for purchase from the CNIB. This is the accessible architectural design book written by Lesley A. MacDonald, the CNIB's National Coordinator, Accessible Design Service, PPL Orientation and Mobility. To order, please visit **www.accesscontent.ca/clearing-our-path.aspx** .

Karen McCall of Karlen Communications has a number of digital publications available for sale on her web site. Her book, Microsoft Word 2007 from the Keyboard, is available in tagged PDF format with sample documents in DOCX format. Look for it and her other titles at:
www.karlencommunications.com/products.htm .

Upcoming Conferences in Canada

Here's what's happening in Canada between September 1 and December 31, 2009:

September 24-26, 2009
17th National Conference on Learning Disabilities
Whitehorse, Yukon, CANADA
Contact: Learning Disabilities Association of Canada
250 City Centre Avenue, Suite 616
Ottawa, ON CANADA K1R 6K7
Tel: 1-867-668-5167
WWW: **lday.leafsolutions.ca**

October 1-4, 2009
Connections Collections Communities:
Making Museums and Galleries in Canada Inclusive and Accessible
Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA
Contact: National Gallery of Canada

Department of Education and Public Programs
380 Sussex Drive
P.O. Box 427, Station A
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 9N4
Tel: 613-990-1985
FAX: 613-993-4385
E-mail: **accessibility@gallery.ca**
WWW: **www.gallery.ca/conference/**

News Bits

St. Catharines, Ontario's Special Needs Computer Solutions Inc. (**www.SpecialNeedsComputers.ca**) announced in June that they are now a distributor for the ProxTalker, the first talking moveable picture communication system designed for children with autism. For information about this or other products carried by Special Needs Computers, contact Terry Scott, Special Needs Computer Solutions Inc., 50 Niagara St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 4K9, tel: 1-877-724-4922 or 905-641-4922, fax: 1-877-725-7799 or email him at: **Terry@SpecialNeedsComputers.ca** .

ISO/IEC Techical Reports 29138 (Information Technology – Accessibility considerations for people with disabilities) Parts 1-3 have been published and are publicly available at no cost from links off the JTC 1 and SWG-Accessibility web site: **www.jtc1access.org/TR29138.htm** . Part 1 is the User Needs Summary. Part 2 is the Standards Inventory. Part 3 is Guidance on user needs mapping. Mary Frances Laughton participated in the development of these documents.

PDF/UA, most probably the next official ISO standard in the PDF family, has graduated to the ISO status of "Approved Work Item" (AWI). National and International Committees for PDF/UA are working to complete the PDF/UA draft in preparation for the ISO meeting in late October in Orlando, Florida. From there, it is hoped that ISO/AWI 14289 will reach the Draft International Standard stage in the first half of 2010.

Ottawa's Sinclair, Nicholson and Associates (**www.snaconsulting.ca**) recently signed a Master Vendor Agreement with the Ontario Realty Corporation as accessibility consultants in the areas of accessible information and communications, staff training and policies and procedures.

Insight Media Centre Ltd. (**www.insightmediacentre.com**) of Surrey, B.C. is now distributing a new Augmentative Communication Device called the "LOGAN" (by ProxTalker). It works like a conventional PECS book "sentence strip", but with sound capabilities to speak the information. The LOGAN uses sound tags that are

encoded with unique radio frequency identification codes. When a sound tag is placed on a zone button and pressed, the LOGAN detects the tag and speaks the word. The LOGAN can hold thousands of words and it's easy to form complete sentences. Standard words are included and custom words can be added right through the on-board microphone or by computer. Multiple "real human" voices and multiple languages are available. Insight Media Centre is also one of the Canadian distributors for the Writer FUSION keyboard (by AKT) with text-to-speech, and a built- in speaker which enables it to function as an Augmentative Communication Device. For information on these and other special needs products, visit Insight Media Centre's web site or call them toll free at 1-888-541-7772.

On July 30, CVS, the largest retail pharmacy chain in the United States, issued a press release announcing that it will make its web site accessible by the end of this year and that it has already installed tactile keypads in all of its stores so that blind shoppers do not have to disclose their PIN when using a pin-based debit card. The announcement is the result of a settlement agreement that CVS reached with the American Council of the Blind, The California Council of the Blind, and the American Foundation for the Blind, using the Structured Negotiations process.

On August 1, Vancouver-based Aroga Marketing Group (**www.aroga.com**) announced a program to supply free computer access software for Canadian children who are blind or who have low vision and the teachers who work with them, through a new initiative called "Keys for K-12". Aroga reached an agreement with a US company, Serotek (**http://serotek.com**), to offer the "Keys for K-12" program to Canadian Schools. "Keys for K-12" is an Internet and digital information accessibility software and service that will allow visually impaired students and the support teachers working with them, to receive a free license of the "System Access Mobile Edition"screen reader to help them access computers in their school and at home. The program puts blind children on par with their sighted peers as it relates to the use of a computer. The "System Access Mobile" license allows for the System Access screen reader to be installed on up to two computers, as well as onto a U3 USB Memory stick. There are approximately 24,000 school aged children in Canada with visual impairments.

In Victoria, B.C., the Pacific Institute of Sport Excellence's Sport Innovation Center (SPIN) is partnering with the Canadian Sport Center Pacific and Camosun College to provide services and expertise not currently available to the sport community. A key aim of the partnership is to develop pathways encouraging links between the innovation in the high-performance athletic community, the product development sector and the health and wellness of the general population. Although relatively new, SPIN is already working on a number of projects and its current focus is on both the Olympic and Paralympics athletic communities, with a view to taking some of their work out into the general market place. SPIN will keep Accessible News up

to date on their work as it progresses. In the meantime, please contact Joe Misius, SPIN's Manager of business development at: **MisiusJ@camosun.bc.ca** for more details.

The CNIB is offering courses, seminars and both technical and universal design consulting at their national headquarters in Toronto. Upcoming courses include Web Accessible Design and Usability (September 10), PDF Accessibility (September 17) and an AODA Customer Service Workshop (September 24). For details on prices and how to register, visit **www.accesscontent.ca** or email the Accessibility Consulting group at **webaccess@cnib.ca** . You can also call them toll-free at 1-800-563-2642 and ask to speak to an accessibility consultant.

The Center on Disabilities at California State University, Northridge opened the Call for Papers for the 25th Annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference on Monday, August 24, 2009. It will close on Friday, October 16, 2009. Visit **www.csunconference.org** for more information about the Call for Papers and the 2010 CSUN Conference. The 2010 CSUN Conference will be held March 22-27, 2010 at the Manchester Grand Hyatt Hotel in San Diego, California.

Sprint Computer is now the Ottawa-area dealer for HumanWare products. On August 21, HumanWare's Tracy McNamee was on site at Sprint demonstrating a variety of HumanWare's products, in support of the dealership arrangement between the two companies. Sprint's Assisted Devices Program Specialist, June Librada, said his company is pleased to be the local distributor for such an innovative and growing line of products. Tracy McNamee expressed delight in having Sprint as their Ottawa distributor, stating, "June is fantastic. He really knows the local market, knows what his customer's needs are." Ottawa-area residents will find Sprint Computer at 886 Somerset St. W., Ottawa K1R 6R7 and can reach June Librada at 613-563-7598, by email at **june@sprintcomputer.com** or visit Sprint's web site at **www.sprintcomputer.com** . If you don't live in or around Ottawa, you can find the HumanWare distributor in your area by visiting the HumanWare web site at **www.humanware.com** .

The recipient of T-Base Communications' (**www.tbase.com**) 2009/10 Blind or Partially Sighted Athletic Sponsorship is world record-holding power lifter Stephen Jesso. Jesso, 31, competes in the super heavyweight class (125kg +) and recently broke all previously held records in squat (340kg), bench press (245kg) and dead lift (300kb) exercises at the International Blind Sports Association's Powerlifting Championships in Miami, Florida. He has now set his sights on being the first blind lifter to compete against able-bodied heavyweights and eventually becoming the strongest man, with or without a disability, in the world. This is the fourth year for T-Base's sponsorship program and the company's President and CEO, Sharlyn Ayotte, said "we continue to be impressed by the undeniable passion, ability, and

determination demonstrated by these athletes. We are thrilled to have the unique opportunity to be a part of Stephen's goals and successes, and look forward to supporting his journey."

The Canadian Transportation Agency has produced two implementation guides to help air carriers meet the objectives of two provisions in the Code of Practice: Aircraft Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities. In addition, the guides provide important information for passengers with disabilities, including those with visual, hearing or mobility impairments. The guides were released on September 1, and are available on the Agency's Web site at: **www.cta-otc.gc.ca/doc.php?did=2248&lang=eng** . Carriers have until December 1, 2009 to implement changes to ensure sufficient space aboard aircraft for service dogs, and until March 31, 2010 to install tactile row markers. Multiple formats and print versions of the guides are available by sending an e-mail to info@cta.gc.ca or by calling 1-888-222-2592.

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **www.at-links.gc.ca/as**. At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from Us

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Deb Finn
Industry Canada
300 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0C8

tel: 613-990-4297
fax: 613-957-4076
TTY: 613-998-5923
email: **deb.finn@ic.gc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

LIBRARY
JUN 2 2 2010
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

ACCESSIBLE NEWS Nº 38

$65,000 in Physiotherapy Research Grants Available

More than $65,000 in grant and scholarship funding is available in 2010 through the Physiotherapy Foundation of Canada's (PFC) annual awards program. The Seniors' Health Division (SHD) of the Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA) joins the Paediatric Division, the Orthopaedic Division (Alun Morgan Memorial Award) and the Neurosciences Division, in the growing list of CPA divisions offering research grants through PFC's annual awards program.

Also being offered are the Community Rehab Research Grant in Community Projects; the PABC Research Grant for projects in B.C.; the OrthoCanada Research Award in Neck and Back Rehabilitation and Core Stability along with Masters and Doctoral level scholarships by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada in collaboration with PFC.

The deadline for applications is February 19, 2010. To learn more about the above and other funding opportunities for pilot or feasibility projects, please visit **www.physiotherapyfoundation.ca** or contact PFC's office at **416-979-0115** or toll-free at **1-888-285-4136**.

CIBC.com the first banking site in Canada to receive CNIB Site Check certification

A suite of new site enhancements was launched on October 9, making **www.cibc.com** the first Canadian bank website to receive CNIB Site Check certification for providing barrier-free web access to people who are blind or have vision loss.

The new accessibility features give clients the ability to increase or decrease text size and further enhance text readability by changing the contrast on any of the pages within www.cibc.com. These new features also enhance screen reader compatibility, as clients can navigate easily by text headings, instead of image, and by quick access links that allow clients with screen readers to navigate directly to main content.

"At CIBC, we strive to make our banking channels accessible to all of our clients and we're proud to be the first bank recognized by CNIB's Site Check program," said Christina Kramer, Executive Vice-President, CIBC Retail Markets. "Over 830,000

Canadians live with vision impairment so it's important for us to provide improved online access for all of our clients."

The CNIB Site Check program evaluates the accessibility of websites based upon a range of criteria and gives a passing grade to sites that provide barrier-free web design. In addition to improved accessibility, www.cibc.com is now easier to use with even more ways to access important information instantly and wider pages loaded with more of the features clients use every day.

"CIBC met and exceeded the accessibility recommendations outlined in our accessibility audit," says John M. Rafferty, CNIB President & CEO. "It is imperative that financial institutions and other corporations take CIBC's lead and implement accessible digital platforms – for people who are blind or have vision loss – to provide equal access to online information for all Canadians."

CIBC has a long history of supporting CNIB across Canada having contributed more than $840,000 over the years. This includes a $300,000 donation to the CNIB Summer Reading Program.

CIBC also offers a number of other accessible banking alternatives for people with vision loss including over 1,700 "Access for All" ABMs which feature headphone jacks for audio access, brighter lighting and the option to black out the screen to increase privacy while at the machine. CIBC clients can also request statements in braille and large print formats and have access to advanced speech recognition (TTY) technology through telephone banking.

Mediac recognizes CTVglobemedia as key supporter of its Accessibility Lens service to meet CRTC accessibility requirements

Thanks to support from CTVglobemedia Inc. (CTVgm) through the CTVgm-CHUM tangible benefits, Mediac Inc. has launched its Accessibility Lens monitoring service. This new tool will help broadcasters comply with requirements introduced by the CRTC in 2009 to encourage broadcasters to provide more closed-captioned programming for hearing and visually-impaired Canadians.

CTVglobemedia was the founding sponsor of a research tool created by Mediac to monitor accessible programming content. Continuing its support, CTVglobemedia's financial commitment of "Monitor 2: A report on best practices in the provision of accessible media in Canadian Broadcasting" will make possible the development of quantitative measures of the effects of policy, marketing and sponsorship revenue, on the availability, quality and technological advances of accessibility in Canadian broadcasting.

The Monitor 2 study is taking place fifteen years after the publication of Mediac's first snapshot, "The Monitor Project". Mediac's new research will not only permit broadcasters and decision-makers to assess progress over time, but will also enable broadcasters to demonstrate their compliance with CRTC accessibility requirements for closed-captioning and descriptive video.

"When we first discussed this research, CTVglobemedia emphasized the importance of using it not just for reporting purposes, but as a way to encourage additional partnerships and tangible progress," explained Beverley Milligan, President and CEO of Mediac Inc. "As an independent, third-party service, the Accessibility Lens will help all broadcasters comply with the CRTC's regulatory framework for accessible content."

"CTVglobemedia is pleased to support the research that will aim to provide additional tools for broadcasters to meet their goals to further the availability of accessible programming content in Canada" said Paul Sparkes, Executive Vice President, Corporate Affairs at CTVglobemedia.

Other partners in Mediac's research initiative include Media Access Australia, Ryerson University, Nordicity Group, Starling Access Services and Industry Canada.

New Products or Services

Since the last issue of Accessible News, a number of Canadian companies have announced the launch of new products, new versions of existing products or launched new Web sites. Here's a brief summary. The companies have been presented in alphabetical order.

Cougar Mountain Marketing Corporation has developed a new automated, ergonomic pill crusher designed for healthcare workers. The company has also signed an agreement with British Columbia's Occupational Health and Safety Agency for Healthcare (OHSAH: **www.ohsah.bc.ca**) to bring the device to market. The device is expected to go on sale in the spring of 2010. For information on this and Cougar Mountain's other products, contact them by email at **info@telestik.com** or visit their website at **http://telestik.com**.

On November 11, HumanWare **(www.humanware.ca)** launched the BrailleNote Apex, the thinnest and lightest notetaker especially for professionals and students who are blind. At just 2 cm (0.78") thick and weighing only 812 grams (1.8 lbs), the BrailleNote Apex is designed for portability and functionality. Added horsepower and multiple storage options define the BrailleNote Apex's productivity with its 8 GB of internal memory and support for high capacity SDHC cards, along with 4

high-speed USB 2.0 ports, built-in Wi-Fi, Ethernet and Bluetooth. The advanced technology is driven by the new Windows CE 6.0 operating system which enables the expansion of KeySoft, a comprehensive, user-friendly suite of productivity applications with feature-rich content that is 100% accessible. This powerful software combination will facilitate future enhancements and ongoing improvements in response to user requests.

Special Needs Computers (**www.specialneedscomputers.ca**) has added two new products to its catalogue: the Light Keyboard, designed specifically for quadriplegics or others for easy keyboard access, including wheelchair control and the eeZee Mouse, a hands-free mouse that can be attached to any place on the user's body that they can control.

Upcoming Conferences in Canada

Here's what's happening in Canada between January 1 and March 31, 2010:

March 10-13, 2010
26th International Seating Symposium
Vancouver, British Columbia, CANADA
Contact: Katia Selezeneva
Tel: 604-822-7524
FAX: 604-822-4835
E-mail: **ipad@interchange.ubc.ca**
WWW: **www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/26th_Seating.htm**

News Bits

In October, T-Base Communications (**www.tbase.com**) announced the signing of a definitive partnership agreement with research and consulting firm DALBAR (**www.dalbar.ca**). Under the agreement, the two companies will work together in launching new Accessibility Crieteria to measure the effectiveness of standard statement design in the areas of braille, large print, e-Text and audio formats. DALBAR develops standards for, and provides research, ratings and rankings of intangible factors to the mutual fund, broker/dealer, discount brokerage, healthcare, life insurance and banking industries. They include investor behaviour, Internet services, customer satisfaction, service quality, communications and ratings of financial and healthcare professionals. Specializing in website accessibility, braille, large print, e-Text and audio, T-Base Communications provides alternative format solutions, assisting government and Fortune 500 companies to communicate with

their customers who cannot access information in conventional ways. They work with the most progressive companies globally, converting conventionally printed statements and documents into alternative formats privately and securely, providing leading organizations the opportunity to reach a wider audience while simultaneously meeting the diverse information needs of their client base. Both T-Base and DALBAR look forward to raising the standards in the industry.

On November 10, HumanWare (**www.humanware.ca**) announced a distribution agreement with Intel for the Intel® Reader, a mobile handheld device designed to increase independence for people who have trouble reading standard print. The Intel Reader, which is about the size of a paperback book, converts printed text to digital text, and then reads it aloud to the user. Its unique design combines a high-resolution camera with the power of an Intel® Atom™ processor, allowing users to point, shoot and listen to printed text. For more information on the Intel Reader, visit **www.humanware.com/intelreader** .

The "12th International Conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled Persons (TRANSED 2010)"is to be held in Hong Kong, China from June 2 to 4, 2010. This event is hosted by The Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation with the support of the Hong Kong SAR government and co-sponsored by the U.S. Transportation Research Board. The main theme is "Sustainable Transport and Travel for All". Early Bird Registration is open until December 31, 2009 and the Call for Exhibitors is available for 10% discount until that date. The Preliminary Programme is available on the conference website. Invited Speakers Information is also available on the conference website and the Application for Travel Scholarships is now open. For updates and contact information on "TRANSED 2010", please visit the conference website: **www.transed2010.hk/**

A research intitiative based at the University of British Columbia has been given a six-year Emerging Team Grant of $1.5 million from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to study how older adults use powered wheelchairs. The research team is comprised of researchers from across Canada, including clinical researchers, scientists and engineers and is led by Prof. William Miller of UBC's Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy. The team will look at the current use of powered wheelchairs, determine how older adults can make better use of the equipment and identify ways to improve the chairs themselves. In addition to traditional stakeholders such as wheelchair users, caregivers and advocacy agencies, the team will also partner with non-traditional stakeholders such as city planners and device manufacturers throughout the life of the project.

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **www.at-links.gc.ca/as**. At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from Us

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Deb Finn
Industry Canada
300 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0C8

tel: 613-990-4297
fax: 613-957-4076
TTY: 613-998-5923
email: **deb.finn@ic.gc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Industry Canada Industrie Canada
Government Publications

Sector Office: Assistive Devices Industry Winter 2010

ACCESSIBLE NEWS Nº 39

LIBRARY
JUN 22 2010
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Accessible Procurement Toolkit Gets an Update

The Accessible Procurement Toolkit (APT: **www.apt.gc.ca**) is being updated. When the APT was launched, its requirement clauses reflected the state of the art for mainstream products and workplace technologies. Over the years, much mainstream technology has been expanded and improved to provide users with additional functionality. New standards, such as the Canadian Standards Association's B651.2-07 "Accessible design for self-service interactive devices" have also been completed since the APT was first launched, providing us with further guidance to assist in ensuring that mainstream technology is accessible at purchase or with minimal adaptation. For these reasons, we decided that the time was ripe to take a look at the APT and ensure that it continues to meet your procurement needs.

The APT updates have been undertaken for Industry Canada by Mediac Inc. (**www.mediac.ca**). Some of the upgraded content has already been added to the APT site and the rest will follow shortly.

Transport Canada R&D Project on Mobility Scooters

The Transportation Development Centre of Transport Canada has contracted Rutenberg Design Inc. to conduct a project to analyze and assess the environment for three- and four-wheeled mobility scooters and to identify future needs in order to help ensure the safety of users.

One of the impacts of the aging population in Canada and in North America is an increasing popularity of scooter usage, especially among baby boomers. Their operation in mixed traffic, in public transit vehicles, and on sidewalks and pathways is causing safety concerns for both users and other traffic participants.

Transport Canada would encourage anyone with information on this subject to send it to Mr. Daniel Blais, Research Officer, at Transport Canada (**daniel.blais@tc.gc.ca**). The department is especially interested in accidents involving scooters (with pedestrians, cars, bicycles, etc.) and access to public transit vehicles (buses, trains, subway, etc.).

Ontario's Technologies Show Considerable Promise

On January 13, Dr. Morris (Mickey) Milner, President and CEO of The Health Technology Exchange (HTX: **www.htx.ca**) announced the investment of over $1.7 million towards the development of seven emerging medical technologies.

Now in its fourth round of funding, the Business Investment Program has invested over $4 million towards the program, since the pilot launched in 2006. The program is jointly funded by the Ontario Ministry of Research and Innovation, (**www.mri.gov.on.ca**) through HTX and the Ontario Centres of Excellence Inc. (**www.oce-ontario.org**), and the National Research Council's Industrial Research Assistance Program (**www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/irap-pari/index.html**). Funding supports business-driven R&D undertaken by a team from a recognized Ontario research institution in collaboration with a partnering company.

"Ontario is proud to support HTX in growing Ontario's health technologies sector. The Business Investment Program matches Ontario's cutting-edge companies with our world-class research institutions, helping open new doors for Ontario's best and brightest entrepreneurs while bringing jobs and leading-edge medical care to Ontarians," said John Milloy, Ontario's Minister of Research and Innovation.

Projects from seven Ontario companies have been selected among a pool of 20 proposals to commercially develop or advance their technologies. The projects span a broad spectrum of medical technologies including imaging, diagnostics, remote monitoring and assistive devices.

Included in this list is Kanata's eSight Corp. (**www.esightcorp.com**), which has received $500,000 from the province to bring its game-changing "evSpex"™ device to the global market. evSpex™ is a head-worn assistive device for people who experience low vision resulting from disease or trauma. The device consists of a high-resolution video camera and two "micro-displays" to significantly improve the wearer's view of the world by optimizing the use of his or her remaining visual function. The incorporation of gaze tracking technology will enable contextual, local application of image enhancement algorithms based on the wearer's specific point of focus within the device's broader field of view. The technology is being developed in collaboration with the Vision Research Program of the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute and is expected to go into production later this year.

Also receiving funding is Toronto's Quillsoft (**www.wordq.com**) for the development of 3G word prediction for its WordQ word prediction software for individuals with learning disabilities. The software offers plug-ins including SpeakQ, which provides speech recognition and keywords in combination with word prediction and speech output. Quillsoft is currently developing new prediction algorithms that will consider contextual information, in collaboration with Bloorview Kids Rehab.

Descriptive Video Industry Standards to be developed

Beverley Milligan, President and CEO of Mediac Inc. has announced the successful creation of a draft Best Practices Guide for Descriptive Video. This guide will be adopted by Media Access Canada, an organization currently being incorporated as a not-for-profit entity, to establish various committees to participate in the development of a broadcast and educational industry standard for live, post production and theatrical descriptions.

"In order to create a standard and best practices guide for the creation of accessible content, be it descriptive video or closed captioning, we need to build consensus between stakeholders. In this case it means the broadcast, educational and production industries, with strong participation and engagement of consumers of descriptive video and audio description", stated Milligan.

Eight months of international research, interviews, and production systems studies, from four researchers, all of whom are experts in some form of accessible content and research, have compiled the necessary information to create a draft manual which discusses accessible production systems integration, qualitative measures, examples and an overview of the target consumer to whom the accessibility is being provided.

The design of the Best Practices Guide for Descriptive Video will complement the current captioning standards being updated by a captioning working group as part of the CRTC decision 2009-430. "Having accessibility standards for both captioning and description will allow the broadcast community to manage the costs and have a base line for the measurement of good and bad accessible content for CRTC reporting purposes" commented Milligan.

An initial working group will be appointed to review the best practices guide, establish a framework and time frame for finalizing the guide and identify sub-committee work and members. If you are interested in volunteering in the development of the description standards, please contact Mediac at: **info@mediac.ca.** "At this point", said Milligan, "we are hoping to identify as many people and organizations as possible to contribute, in some way, in consensus building and final publication of the standard".

For more information, visit **www.mediac.ca** .

A New Vision of India

The President and CEO of Braille Jymico, Mr. Jacques Cote, accompanied the Prime Minister of Quebec, Mr. Jean Charest during a commercial mission to India at the beginning of February.

Braille Jymico specialises in the transcription and production of literary and scientific textbooks for blind and visually impaired students from kindergarten up to the university level. These textbooks and manuals are adapted into Braille, large print, electronic text or into audio format.

During the mission, Mr. Cote's objectives were to evaluate the number of students who are blind and visually impaired in India, to get acquainted with the universities and other educational institutions that teach and offer services to the blind, then to evaluate the needs for adapted scholarly materials. Mr. Cote was also in India to evaluate common interests and to establish possible business partnerships.

As a blind person and after having taught blind and visually impaired students for more than 25 (twenty-five) years, Mr. Cote knows the importance of having accessible textbooks available for these students. During this trip, Mr. Cote visited two establishments dedicated to the education and development of blind girls and women. He mentioned that the living standards of these girls is desperate and that if it weren't for these institutions, the girls would probably be abandoned and on the streets.

The World Health Organization estimates the number of blind and visually impaired people in India at around 9 million. From Mumbai to Bangalore then to New Delhi, Mr. Cote also had the honour of meeting with people from the National Association for the Blind India (NAB), The National Federation for the Blind (NFB) as well as the All India Confederation for the Blind (AICB).

For information about Braille Jymico, visit them on the web at: **www.braillejymico.com** , call them at 418-624-2105 or toll-free at 1-877-BRAILLE (272-4553) or email them at: **jcote@braillejymico.com** .

NetCentric Releases Full Production Version of PAW for Microsoft Word

Kanata-based NetCentric Technologies (**www.netcentric.com**) has completed the beta testing of their PDF Accessibility Wizard (PAW) for Microsoft Word and has released the full production version. Beta testing took place at more than 50 universities, government agencies and corporations.

PAW is a breakthrough technology that makes it possible to create accessible PDF documents directly from Microsoft Office, as well as to make the Word document itself accessible. As easy to use as spell check, PAW does not require any prior knowledge of accessibility concepts or techniques. The program guides the user through accessibility checkpoints using a Wizard-like interface that runs within the Word environment .

"The ability to access and process electronic information has become one of the most important factors in leading a full and productive life in today's knowledge-based society. While steps have been taken to make many websites accessible to people with disabilities, Microsoft Office and PDF files still are lagging behind. PAW puts Accessibility in the hands of the content author where is belongs" said Ferass ElRayes, NetCentric's VP of Product Development.

MS Word users who use PAW will improve the quality of accessible documents, increase the amount of accessible documents and lower the cost of compliance with accessibility standards.

NetCentric has been developing software for web and PDF accessibility since 2000. Their market-leading CommonLook Section 508 for Adobe Acrobat product is the primary tool used to make PDF documents accessible at many US Government agencies, state governments, educational and financial institutions. For further information, visit **www.net-centric.com/paw/** on the web or email **jhowcroft@net-centric.com** .

New Products or Services

Since the last issue of Accessible News, a number of Canadian companies have announced the launch of new products, new versions of existing products or launched new Web sites. Here's a brief summary. The companies have been presented in alphabetical order.

Vancouver-based Aroga (**www.aroga.com**) is offering its Canadian customers a trade-in deal on used DAISY talking book disc players. Trade in any DAISY talking book player, even if it's no longer working, for a $100 discount on any of the following DAISY book players: Plextalk PTN2 Disc Player, Plextalk Pocket PTP1

Digital Player or the BookSense XT Digital Player. Trade-in is offered on a one-to-one basis – only one trade-in per new unit purchased. For more information on Aroga's "Smelling Like a DAISY" Trade-in Program, call 1-800-561-6222 ext. 1108.

The CNIB (**www.cnib.ca**) is working on the Spring issue of their product catalogue, which is due for an April launch. Geoff FitzGibbon, CNIB's Director of Business Operations, tells Accessible News that this year, they are making changes which they expect to be more desirable for customers and more cost effective for advertisers. Instead of listing all 1,100 products carried by the CNIB, they will focus on the top 100 products in demand with their customers. They will print the catalogue twice a year, in April and September so that new products can be added and discontinued items deleted. The size of each print issue of the CNIB catalogue will also drop from the current 178 to approximately 36 pages. Businesses looking for more information, including advertising rates, should contact Geoff FitzGibbon at: **Geoff.FitzGibbon@cnib.ca** or call him at 416-486-2500 extension 7484.

On February 1, HumanWare (**www.humanware.ca**) announced that Oratio for BlackBerry®) smartphones is now available for purchase. Formally known as Orator for BlackBerry smartphones, Oratio is the first screen reader software solution that enables visually impaired users to access and operate BlackBerry smartphones using state of the art Text-To-Speech technology to convert the visual information displayed on the BlackBerry smartphone screen into a intuitive speech output. This enables its users to use BlackBerry smartphones to increase their independence and productivity in today's competitive world.

PowerCaptions (**www.powercaptions.ca**) is a Toronto-based organization formed to meet higher quality and cost-effective captioning needs. The company's aim is to empower audiences to customize their caption preferences leading to greater content interaction. PowerCaptions' goal is to provide the highest level of caption quality at the most competitive price. PowerCaptions, which is a division of ScholarLab (**www.scholarlab.ca**), has the technology necessary to reuse existing captions from any source, providing the capability to "extract" captions from a broadcast television show and reuse them for DVD, Blu-Ray, Web Media Players, or Hand-held devices such as the iPhone. The company also states that it can help organizations seamlessly and cost-effectively reuse their existing captions at a fraction of the cost so individuals are not limited to one medium. For more information, contact Ricky Shah, Senior Consultant, PowerCaptions at Tel: 416-303-0727 or Toll Free at: 1-877-755-SLAB (7522), Fax: 1-888-864-3388 or by email at: **rshah@powercaptions.ca** .

Upcoming Conferences in Canada

Here's what's happening in Canada between March 1 and June 30, 2010:

March 10 - 13, 2010
26th International Seating Symposium
Vancouver, British Columbia, CANADA
Contact: Katia Selezeneva
Tel: 604-822-7524
FAX: 604-822-4835
E-mail: **ipad@interchange.ubc.ca**
WWW: **www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/26th_Seating.htm**

April 13, 2010
Access Waterloo Region (formerly Community Connections): Information for Persons with Disabilities, their Families, Caregivers, and Professionals within Waterloo Region
Kitchener Ontario CANADA
Contact: Val Millen
Tel: 519-578-3660 x 2325
E-mail: **info@accesswaterlooregion.ca**
WWW: **accesswaterlooregion.ca/**

May 17-18, 2010
Disability Resource Network of British Columbia Pathways to Success: The Power of Enquiry, Connections & Mentorship
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
Contact: Deloris Piper, Wayne McNiven
DRNBC
50 West Pender Street
Vancouver, BC Canada V6B 2S9
Tel: 604-443-8438
FAX: 604-443-8433
E-mail: **delorisgpiper@gmail.com**
WWW: **www.drnbc.org**

May 17-20 2010
Annual College Committee on Disability Issues Conference
Huntsville, Ontario, CANADA
Contact: Chris Gunnell
Centre for Access and Disability Services Georgian College
1 Georgian Dr.
Barrie, ON L4M 3X9
Tel: 1 705 728 1968 ext. 1231
FAX: 1 705 722 5179
E-mail: **cgunnell@georgianc.on.ca**
WWW: **www.ccdiconference.org**

May 27-30, 2010
International Society for Gerontology 7th World Conference
Vancouver, BC, CANADA
Contact: Dr. Gloria Gutman
ISG2010 Secretariat
Simon Fraser University Gerontology Research Centre
#2800 - 515 W. Hastings St.
Vancouver, BC, V6B 5K3
Tel: 778-782-5063
FAX: 778-782-5066
E-mail: **isg2010@sfu.ca**
WWW: **www.sfu.ca/isg2010**

June 2-4, 2010
The 2010 Canadian Disability Studies Association Conference
Montreal, Quebec, CANADA
E-mail: **cdsa.acei@gmail.com**
WWW: **www.cdsa-acei.ca/conference.html**

June 3-6, 2010
CHHA National Conference & Trade Show "Good Vibrations"
Sudbury, Ontario, CANADA
Contact: Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
2415 Holly Lane, Suite 205
Ottawa, Ontario, K1V 7P2
Tel: 613-526-1584
FAX: 613-526-4718
TTY: 613-526-2692
E-mail: **conference@chha.ca**
WWW: **www.chha.ca/conference**

June 8-9, 2010
Aiming for Accessibility - Meeting standards, making change
Guelph, Ontario, CANADA
Contact: Office of Open Learning
160 Johnston Hall
University of Guelph
Guelph ON N1G 2W1
Tel: 519-767-5000
FAX: 519-767-1114
E-mail: **Info@open.uoguelph.ca**
WWW: **www.accessconf.open.uoguelph.ca**

Canadian Companies and Speakers at CSUN 2010

This year marks the 25th year that California State University, Northridge (CSUN: **www.csun.edu/cod/conference**) will hold its annual International Conference on Assistive Technology and Persons with Disabilities. This year, the conference has moved from Los Angeles to San Diego, California and it will run from March 22 - 27, 2010 at the Manchester Grand Hyatt Hotel.

Although Industry Canada no longer exhibits at CSUN, we still want to make sure that those of you who will be attending the conference know where to find the Canadian Exhibitors. We also want you to be aware of the sessions that will be presented entirely or in part by Canadians. Let's start with the exhibitors:

Compusult Limited Booth 412
Daedalus Technologies, Inc., Booths 800, 801 and 900
Issist Assistive Technologies, Booth 918
HumanWare, Booth 213
Madentec Limited, Booths 611 and 710
NetCentric Technologies, Booth 716
Quillsoft Ltd., Booth 616
Sight Enhancement Systems, Booth 422

Many Canadians are also giving sessions at the conference. The following list gives you the date, time, place and level of expertise for each of the sessions. All times given are in local (Pacific) time. Please note that CSUN asks you to reserve a seat for sessions you wish to attend. You'll find information on how to do this by visiting the CSUN Conference Sessions page , clicking on the link to "General Sessions" and following the directions from there.

Wednesday, March 24, 2010
8:00 - 9:00:

1. **Intel Reader: The new face of mobile print readers**
Michel Pepin, HumanWare
Beginner
Room: Molly AB

2. **Convert It, Read It, Take It with You Part I**
Mary Jo Barry, Don Johnston Incorporated, Brenda McBride, HumanWare and Steve Bennett, Dolphin Computer Access
Intermediate
Madeleine AB PC Lab

3. **Designing Accessible & Usable Application User Interfaces for Mobile Phones**
Greg Fields, Research In Motion (RIM)
Beginner
Edward AB

8:00 - 8:30:

The POSITIVES Scale: A Method for Assessing Technology Accessibility in Postsecondary Education
Jennison Asuncion, Mai Nguyen, Jillian Budd, Maria Barile, Anthony Tibbs, and Catherine Fichten, Adaptech Research Network, Chris Gaulin, National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) and Rhonda Amsel, McGill University
Beginner
Del Mar AB

9:20 - 10:20:

Convert It, Read It, Take It with You Part II
Brenda McBride, HumanWare, Steve Bennett, Dolphin Computer Access and Mary Jo Barry, Don Johnston Incorporated
Intermediate
Madeleine AB PC Lab
1:50 - 2:20:

Tactile Maps of Montreal Subway Stations, an Efficient Tool for Mobility Instructors
Tommy Théberge and Pierre Ferland, Institute Nazareth et Louis-Braille
Advanced
Betsy C

3:10 - 4:10:

Transitioning to Universal Computer Access for the Workplace and Higher Ed
Randy Marsden, Madentec Limited, Kelly Fonner, Fonner Training & Consulting and Scott Marfilius, Independent
Intermediate
Madeleine AB PC Lab

Thursday, March 25, 2010
9:20 - 10:20:

Bringing Document Accessibility to the Grassroots: The Promise of Author-Level Tools
Deborah Kaplan, CSU Chancellor's Office and Monir ElRayes, NetCentric Technologies
Beginner
Emma C

10:40 - 11:40:

Creating Closed Captioned Content for BlackBerry Smartphones
Greg Fields, Research In Motion (RIM)
Beginner
Maggie

3:10 - 4:10:

Mobile Communication Solutions for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Dave Dougall, Research in Motion
Beginner
Ford C

Friday, March 26, 2010
10:40 - 11:40:

1. **Integrating Accessibility Standards and Practices into a Large International Bank**
Pina D'Intino, Bank of Nova Scotia and Dan Shire, IBM Canada
Intermediate
Del Mar AB

2. **Preliminary Findings on Social Media Use and Accessibility: A Canadian Perspective**
Jennison Asuncion, Jillian Budd, Maria Barile, and Catherine Fichten, Adaptech Research Network, Chris Gaulin, National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) and Rhonda Amsel, McGill University
Beginner
Madeleine AB

3:10 - 4:10:

Orator for BlackBerry Smartphones, Stay Connected to your Life
Michel Pepin, HumanWare and Greg Fields, Research In Motion (RIM)
Beginner
Ford AB

News Bits

TRANSED 2010, the 12th International Conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled Persons takes place in Hong Kong from June 2 - 4, 2010. Visit the TRANSED 2010 web site at **www.transed2010.hk** for information regarding Applications for Travel Scholarships, Pre-Conference Workshops, the Post-Conference Technical Tour, the Best Paper and Best Poster Award, the Announcement on Acceptance of Paper and Poster, the Updated Conference Programme and the Exhibition Update.

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **www.at-links.gc.ca/as**. At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from Us

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Deb Finn
Industry Canada
300 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0C8

tel: 613-990-4297
fax: 613-957-4076
TTY: 613-998-5923
email: **deb.finn@ic.gc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Government Publications

Sector Office: Assistive Devices Industry

Spring 2010

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 40

Aroga Announces Some Beginnings and an End

Aroga (**www.aroga.com**), the Vancouver-based company dealing in low vision, blindness, communication, physical access and education products for people with disabilities has announced a couple of new partnerships and a parting of the ways.

In May, the company announced a partnership with Bones, a leading Swiss manufacturer of digital talking book players and adaptive aids for distribution of Bones' product portfolio including the Milestone 312. The Milestone 312 is a device about the size of a credit card that provides people with a vision loss with a voice recorder, using an internal or external microphone; a DAISY talking book player that reads text documents in such formats as TXT, Audible.com and DAISY 3.0 (NLS, Bookshare); a music and text to speech player that supports MP3, AAC, WMA, WAV, DAISY 2.02 and AA/AAX (Audible); an AM/FM radio; and a clock and alarm.

Aroga has also announced a partnership with Tutorwiz. The primary purpose is to combine forces to provide high level assistive technology expertise, education and support for educators.

The parting of the ways comes with the end of Aroga's distribution partnership with Freedom Scientific. Dating back over 20 years, Aroga was one of the first dealers for the original trio of companies which were purchased to form Freedom Scientific in April, 2000. Aroga was instrumental in the Canadian introduction of JAWS for DOS and the first version of JAWS for Windows, produced by Henter Joyce; Openbook, the original OCR product for the visually impaired, introduced by Arkenstone; and such Blazie Engineering products and the Braille N Speak, which revolutionized electronic note taking for the blind.

In a statement to the company's customers, Aroga's President, Bob Vigerut, said "We remain very proud to have been a part of the historical achievements of these pioneers of Assistive Technology....The core strength of those three pioneering companies was innovation. Our core strength as a company has been to seek out innovators from around the world and bring their products to Canada. We are determined that our philosophy remains unchanged. We will continue to seek out products that we feel represent the best combination of quality, innovation and value.

While the company will no longer be a distributor of Freedom Scientific products, Aroga pledges to provide lifetime support and repair capabilities on any Freedom Scientific product purchased from them. "We will not desert the thousands of

NOV 05 20

Canadians who have trusted us with their purchase of JAWS and other Freedom products over the past 20 years", Mr. Vigerut said.

Profile: Sage Solutions for Independent Living Inc.

An Ottawa company that specializes in accessibility renovations counts Canadian military families among its customers. Robert Howlett is the President of Sage Solutions for Independent Living Inc. (**www.sagesolutions.ca**) and a passionate advocate of renovating commercial and residential properties to improve accessibility for people with disabilities.

In the past three years, the company has carried out home renovations for members of the Canadian Forces who have acquired disabilities as a result of being injured in the line of duty. Sage Solutions also manages an increasing number of accessibility renovations for people whose abilities are changing but who want to remain living in their own homes. With one in seven Canadians currently aged 65 years or over, that proportion of the population is expected to double by 2031. Older adults are a market with a lot of growth potential.

Accessible News recently spoke to Sage Solutions's Robert Howlett about his company and about making homes usable by their occupants. Here's what he had to tell us:

Accessible News (AN): How long has your company been in business?

SAGE: The company was incorporated in July 2002. We have two sources of revenue:

1- We're a North American distributor of accessibility products, mainly bathroom safety-related products.

2- We also provide residential installation services and commercial fit ups for barrier free access.

AN: How did you get into doing renovations for Forces personnel?

SAGE: We were first contacted by DND in 2007 to help them prepare for a returning soldier from Afghanistan who was injured by an IED (Improvised Explosive Device). We were asked to advise on the suitability of modifying a PMQ (Private Married Quarters). Ultimately the soldier chose to live off base as the PMQ would not have been suitable for his growing family needs. Since then, we've been involved in a number of projects for military families, many of which include elevator installations, bathroom modifications and improved access to and from the home.

AN: Are you seeing an increase in these types of renovations?

SAGE: Absolutely. Although there are lots of companies that can do the work, few have the knowledge or interest in accessibility modifications and even fewer have people with the communication skills needed to liaise with the client care team that may include occupational therapists, case managers and military service managers. This is our niche, excellent quality workmanship and project management.

AN: You're an Ottawa-based company. How far outside of Ottawa will you take on jobs?

SAGE: Right now we can manage projects throughout the greater Toronto and Ottawa regions. Halifax and the Maritime region will follow.

AN: What are the main concerns that homeowners have in planning an accessible renovation?

SAGE: A big problem is that most residential housing is not designed and built to be accessible or easily modified. So, when a client's mobility needs change, the degree of modification and subsequent costs can be quite considerable. This is compounded by the fact that the decision to renovate for accessibility is a reactive one and made mostly during the course of a person's accident or disease process. Very often families are dealing with a great deal of stress over and above what they need to consider for an accessibility renovation. So to answer the question, I think that homeowners need to keep accessibility in mind when purchasing or renovating a property because accessibility is eventually going to be an issue for someone living in or visiting that house.

About ten years ago, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) did a lot of work on "Flex Housing", a concept where new home builders would design and build homes that could be easily modified for accessibility, but it was an idea that was probably a bit ahead of its time. Even now, housing that is supposed to be designed for "adult living" is not always accessible. In some cases, all "adult living" means is that there are no children in the building.

AN: Is it a lot more expensive to do an accessible renovation than just a regular reno?

SAGE: A regular renovation may focus on one room or area of a house, like a kitchen or bathroom. Renovations for accessibility can include access to and from the house (landscaping), access through the house (hallways, stairs and basements) and bathrooms that most often need to be modified for safety and access. So for the most part, an accessibility renovation is usually more comprehensive.

AN: Are there federal or provincial programs to help people pay for the cost?

SAGE: The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) have a number of programs available to assist with the costs of home modifications. However eligibility is usually income dependent. Home modifications for accessibility can also be claimed as a tax credit. Speak with your accountant for more information.

In our opinion, there needs to be more education and financial incentives for middle-income earners to age in place. Aging in place can help to reduce health care costs by decreasing the need for provincial long term care facilities and improving the efficacy of community delivered healthcare programs. But you have to have housing that's accessible and safe to live in. I expect that as more Canadians reach the age of 65, critical mass will eventually drive the government to take home modification a bit more seriously.

There are federal and provincial subsidy programs available, but they are generally income dependent. For more information on these programs, you're best to contact Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation (**www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca**) for more information.

From a military perspective, the Department of National Defence has been very proactive in sourcing funding to assist injured and disabled military personnel with their accessible housing needs.

AN: If I want to have an accessible renovation done and I don't live in the Ottawa area, is there an organization I can go to find companies that do this kind of work? If not, what would I look for in the Yellow Pages?

SAGE: Great question. The problem here is that the terms of reference for this segment of the renovation sector have yet to be defined. You may be able to find information under headings like Home Modifications/Accessibility Renovations/Universal Design. I would suggest that that anyone can give us a call at 1-866-255-2228 and we'll see if we have any info.

Media Access Canada Plans Renewal 2010 Conference and Seeks Input on the Digital Economy Strategy

Media Access Canada, MAC., has announced it will host a two-day conference called Renewal 2010, in October or early November. The conference will focus on such key issues in Canadian accessible content as policy, compliance measurement, broadcast licence renewals in the coming year, fall-out from the closing of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, accessible web content and new technology

developments, description and captioning standards for multiple platforms. The latest research from the academic world will also be showcased.

Beverley Milligan, President and CEO of Mediac Inc, the consulting firm working with MAC stated "there is a need to better understand relevant policy and regulatory issues that will impact accessible content over the next seven years." Further, she noted "it is time to work with experts in engineering, production, legislation and education to fully understand the difference between real and mythical barriers for the provision of accessible content. To do this, we need to hear from broadcasters, the CRTC and Cultural industry groups and work together as a community of accessible content users, to take a position for the long and short term. Working together to better understand the issues will ensure accessible content, regardless of how it is distributed, will be available to all Canadians."

MAC is a not-for-profit organization with a mandate to achieve a 100% accessible content day for Canadians, regardless of the distribution method. To do this, MAC works with people and organizations who benefit from accessible content, as well as government, broadcast, telecommunication and internet industry sectors to fully understand the issues involved in financing, creating, distributing, and receiving accessible content. Look for more information on MAC and Renewal 2010 at: **www.mediac.ca/MAC**.

MAC is also looking for your thoughts for an accessible digital strategy. On 10 May, 2010, the Government of Canada launched a national consultation with Canadians to develop a national digital economy strategy for Canada. The consultations close on July 9, 2010, and are hosted on-line at **www.digitaleconomy.gc.ca** . Areas which the government is most interested in are those concerning the capacity to innovate using digital technologies. They have broken down the key areas as:

Building a World-Class Digital Infrastructure;

Growing the Information and Communications Technology Industry;

Digital Media;

Creating Canada's Digital Content Advantage; and

Building Digital Skills for Tomorrow.

Accessibility for Canadians with disabilities and anyone else who requires alternative methods for using content will be affected by the results of this consultation, so MAC is preparing a submission on behalf of all people and organizations who need accessible content.

Mediac's Beverley Milligan is also working with MAC on this submission. She noted that at a minimum, any new legislation or policy must harmonize with international standards for accessibility. Further, an accessibility lens for compliance around communication and procurement is essential. For this reason, she stressed, "it is important that a Digital Economic Strategy Accessibility Working Group be appointed to contribute to the body of work that will ultimately be published."

If you have a thought or opinion regarding Canada's digital economy strategy, please send them to **MediaAccessCanada@yahoo.ca** who will ensure they are included in the submission which will be posted at **www.mediac.ca/MAC** upon completion. Remember, the consultations close on Friday, July 9, so send your comments to MAC before that date.

Kinova: reaching out

Kinova (**www.kinovarehab.com**) was founded in 2006 by Charles Deguire and Louis-Joseph Caron L'Écuyer, two passionate, inspiring and visionary young engineers. Located in the heart of Montreal, Kinova develops, manufactures and markets robotic products specifically intended for people with various physical disabilities.

Charles Deguire, got the "invention bug" at an early age when supporting and assisting three of his uncles who had muscular dystrophy. One of them, Jacques Forest, had already devised an ingenious makeshift arm that could pick up all kinds of objects. Motivated and inspired by his inventive uncle, who passed away in 1993, Charles took up his robotic arm idea and elaborated on it. Thus was born JACO.

Launched in 2009, JACO is a six-axis robotic manipulator arm with a three-fingered hand. This little marvel of engineering significantly improves the lives of persons with reduced mobility. Lightweight, very quiet, unobtrusive, safe and even weatherproof, JACO assists anyone with an upper body mobility impairment to perform complex actions. Many everyday activities, such as picking up glasses, holding a fork or opening a door, which most people do without thinking, can become insurmountable for people who have a disability and have to ask someone else to do it for them. The JACO arm makes life easier for these people by giving them greater freedom and independence.

Building on its success, Kinova intends to pursue and further its research and development of products, like JACO, designed to make life easier for persons with mobility limitations.

Quick to be noticed for its exceptional qualities, Kinova's innovation soon garnered awards and bursaries. Among them, first prize in the Quebec Entrepreneurship

Contest, technological and technical category – local level, as well as the award for most innovative project in the BDC Enterprize competition in Vancouver last year.

Building on its success, Kinova intends to pursue and further its research and development of products, like JACO, designed to make life easier for persons with mobility limitations. Concurrently, it has made it a priority to commercialize its latest invention on global markets so that as many users as possible can enjoy the freedom JACO can afford them. The contribution from Canada Economic Development will enable the young firm to work on achieving both of these goals. As a result, more and more people around the world will be able to accept and benefit from the helping hand extended to them through the expertise, dynamism and creative genius of Kinova.

New Products or Services

Since the last issue of Accessible News, a number of Canadian companies have announced the launch of new products, new versions of existing products or launched new Web sites. Here's a brief summary. The companies have been presented in alphabetical order.

In May, HumanWare (**www.humanware.com**) marked the 10th anniversary of the BrailleNote by launching a new 18-cell version of the ultra-thin, ultra-light BrailleNote Apex, a powerful note taker designed for students and professionals who are blind. HumanWare has also announced a Version 3.2 Stream free software upgrade with support for Russian, Belgian Dutch and Brazilian Portuguese languages and a new version 3.2 of the Companion Software that is compatible with both the Stream and ClassMate. This newly updated free software now provides a backup and restores SD card features. Other new features include transfer of DOC and PDF files and Companion now converts MS Word DOC files to HTML and PDF to text files so you can access them on your Stream. Stream currently supports 14 languages with more to come. In addition to new languages and general maintenance, HumanWare now has the underlying framework to support their long anticipated SoftPak. The Stream SoftPak is optional software that provides five features: support of the EPUB book format, ability to play Audible's Enhanced Audio books, playback of MP4 audio including iTunes, Support for MS Word DOCX and ability to record in MP3 or Wav file formats.

Smart Move Training & Development Inc. (**www.smartmovetraining.ca**) offers organizations training and on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and AODA compliance assessments. Public sector, private and not-for-profit organizations in Ontario can visit Smart Move's web site or call 519-599-2785 for details.

News Bits

In April, Edmonton's Madentec Ltd. (**www.madentec.com**) announced that is has partnered with the US company, AbleNet, which will be the master distributor and exclusive manufacturer for all of Madentec's assistive technology products. Madentec will continue to own these products and will provide ongoing development support, but all other facets of product delivery will be administered by AbleNet. The two companies have complimentary product lines, but AbleNet's global sales and marketing penetration far outreaches that of Madentec. For more information, visit Madentec's web site or visit AbleNet at **www.ablenetinc.com** .

On April 30, the Province of Ontario announced the launch of a new Life Sciences Commercialization Strategy that combines existing and new life sciences initiatives into a comprehensive and coordinated plan. The Strategy will help position Ontario as one of the world's leading life sciences jurisdictions. As part of the Strategy, Ontario is investing more than $21 million over five years in the Health Technology Exchange (HTX: **www.htx.ca**) which will help HTX partner with innovative companies, research institutions and health providers to develop cutting-edge medical and assistive technologies (MAT) that can be marketed to the world. The global market for MAT is estimated at $250 billion. An estimated 700 Ontario-based MAT companies employ more than 22,000 and generate approximately $4 billion in revenues.

The Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA: **www.otc-cta.gc.ca**) has reissued a code of practice and released some of its information in the DAISY format. "Take Charge of your Travel: A Guide for Persons with Disabilities", "Reservation Checklist for Persons With Disabilities: A Step-by-step Guide for Planning Your Travel" and "Code of Practice : Aircraft Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities" can now be downloaded from the CTA web site in DAISY 4.0. The "Code of Practice" now also includes the Agency's two implementation guides: "Space for Service Dogs Onboard Large Aircraft" and "Tactile Row Markers Onboard Large Aircraft". Visit the CTA web site for these publications or to request other material.

CNIB accessibility consultants can provide you with the tools and information you need to make your business more inclusive. They can assist you in the design, redesign or audit of your website, to reach a wider audience, convert your documents into an accessible format that works with adaptive technologies, review your new or current desktop applications and provide your service or support desk staff with accessibility tools and training. They can also help make your office building, transit system, workplace or retail store a safe and accessible environment. Visit **www.accesscontent.ca** for more details.

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **www.at-links.gc.ca/as**. At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from Us

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Deb Finn
Industry Canada
300 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0C8

tel: 613-990-4297
fax: 613-957-4076
TTY: 613-998-5923
email: **deb.finn@ic.gc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Publications

Sector Office: Assistive Devices Industry

Summer 2010

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 41

LIBRARY
DEC 14 2010
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Neil Squire Society Launches a CRTC Letter Campaign

The Neil Squire Society (the Society: **www.neilsquire.ca**) is starting a letter campaign to urge the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to enforce one of its directives, requiring Canadian wireless service providers (cell phone companies) to carry at least one handset that meets the needs of people who are blind and/or have a moderate to severe mobility impairment and/or have a cognitive impairment.

The deadline established by the CRTC for compliance with this directive is October 21, 2010, but a survey conducted by the Society in November and December 2009 indicated that cell phone companies do not supply phones that meet the needs of all people with disabilities. This is a matter of concern for many cell phone users with disabilities, particularly as wireless devices are rapidly becoming the method of choice for a suite of applications that extends far beyond simple voice communications.

In a press release announcing the letter campaign, the Society stated:

"Cell phones are about more than just making a call. Cell phones are about being able to connect in many different ways. These ways include text-messaging, email, using the internet, and even mobile banking. They are about finding information and using services when and where you want to. Most people take these things for granted, but people with certain disabilities cannot use standard cell phones.

We need the CRTC to hear your voice".

To learn more please send an email with your contact information, marked "CRTC Complaint", to **info@neilsquire.ca** . To see the full announcement that the Neil Squire Society has posted on their web site, visit: **www.neilsquire.ca/crtc-campaign** .

Group Files Intervention to Get Cable Giant's Support for Accessibility
- by Beverley Milligan, Media Access Canada

Media Access Canada has filed an intervention with the CRTC (Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission) to ask the federal regulator to require communications industry heavyweight Shaw Communications to commit to providing accessible broadcast programming, if its bid to buy Canwest is approved. Canwest is the financially-troubled company that bought the Global TV network in the 1970s. Shaw Communications Inc., one of Canada's largest broadcasting companies has applied to the CRTC for permission to buy the Canwest TV stations. Shaw and its subsidiary, Corus, hold a number of radio, TV, pay TV, specialty TV, cable TV and telephone licences across Canada, and Shaw also provides internet service. Shaw is highly profitable, reporting in 2009 that after expenses it had an income of $1.5 billion, yielding an operating margin of 45.4%.

In 2009, Shaw took in at least 22% of all broadcasting revenues in Canada and if the CRTC allows Shaw to buy Canwest, that figure would go up to at least 27%, making it the dominant broadcaster in Canada. Many believe that the CRTC's approval of Shaw's purchase will bring consolidated media ownership to an unacceptably high level, because Shaw will control the production and distribution of radio and TV content across the country.

It is expected that CRTC will approve Shaw's application, because it has encouraged concentrated broadcasting ownership for thirty years. The Commission believes that only larger broadcasters will be able to afford high-quality Canadian programming for Canadian audiences. The CRTC therefore requires buyers to offer "tangible benefits" to Canada's broadcasting system, generally about 10% of the purchase price of TV stations. These tangible benefits are supposed to enhance and improve what Canadians can see on TV. When CTV bought the CHUM TV stations in 2007, for example, one of the benefits it offered was funding to monitor the level and quality of closed captioning in Canadian television, to show where improvements are needed.

Shaw is spending just over $2 billion to buy the Canwest TV stations, so the CRTC probably expects to see $200 million worth of initiatives that will improve Canadian TV programming. After four months of questioning from the CRTC, Shaw offered new tangible benefits worth $108 million, including the installation of new digital transmitters, two to five TV programs, New Media content and four morning newscasts.

Shockingly, however, Shaw has simply ignored the issue of accessibility for Canadians with disabilities: its application does not even include phrases like "accessibility", "closed captioning" or "descriptive video".

As Snookie Lomow, Executive Director for the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, asked, "If one of Canada's largest and most profitable communications companies does not demonstrate a responsibility to provide full accessibility to their viewing audience, how can the CRTC ensure that Shaw Communications will meet the requirements of the CRTC that all Canadians – including Canadians with disabilities – can enjoy the benefits of broadcasting?"

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind pointed out that the CRTC only acted to increase closed captioning after complaints were filed with the Canadian Human Rights Commission in the late 1990s. "We are asking the CRTC to demand that Shaw step up to the plate to make the investments necessary to increase and improve descriptive video in Canada and on the Canwest stations", said Bill McKeown, Vice President, Government Relations and Divisional Advancement at CNIB. "Ignoring the needs and interests of Canadians with disabilities is simply unacceptable in the 21st century."

CNIB and CHHA joined a number of other organizations and individuals to file an intervention with the CRTC about Shaw's application to buy Canwest. The intervention, submitted by Media Access Canada, makes ten recommendations to make the application acceptable in terms of accessibility. The CRTC will be holding a public hearing on Shaw's application in Calgary, beginning September 20. You can find the Media Access intervention on the CRTC's website, and you can hear or watch the hearing online, through the CRTC's website: **www.crtc.gc.ca** .

Profile: Adaptive Engineering Inc.

A Calgary-based company that started out in the 1970s making tricycles for adults has made a reputation for itself with a portable wheelchair lift that can be used almost anywhere.

Adaptive Engineering specializes in designing and manufacturing products that are easy to use, reliable and affordable. Major customers such as the American passenger rail giant AMTRAK and United Airlines have been using Adaptive Engineering's wheelchair lifts for many years.

In 1975 an engineer named Dave Smith established the Canada Bike Company. The Energy Crisis was at its height and Smith was building three-wheeled bikes that would allow adults, especially older adults, to get around their neighbourhoods in an affordable and energy-efficient way. The experience gained in this enterprise was put to use when the company was re-formed towards the end of the 1970s as Adaptive Engineering. The firm's focus shifted to the development of assistive devices to meet the needs of people with a wider range of mobility disabilities.

In-house lifts both for the bath and for transferring from a wheelchair to a toilet were part of Adaptive Engineering's new product line. The company was meeting local needs in Calgary, both with lifts and with such items as accessible playground equipment and hand cycles, but with a limited local market, it was time for Adaptive Engineering to look for new opportunities. And find them they did.

In 1981,VIA Rail issued a tender for new wheelchair lifts for their station platforms. Smith put in a bid and won the contract. Work began on a prototype wheelchair lift and the result was the development of a station-based, hydraulic cantilevered lift that could be cranked up and down manually. The technology employed in operating the lifts needed some refinement and eventually led to the development of newer generations of lifts that were easier to use.

One of the company's first customers outside of Canada was California Transport, or CALTRAN, which was in the 1980s part of AMTRAK. In 1984-85, Adaptive Engineering developed a wheelchair lift prototype for CALTRAN. The company promptly purchased 15 lifts and later bought another 88 to outfit their stations. Around this time, VIA Rail also bought 35 of the new lifts.

Work on wheelchair lifts for the rail industry led the company to develop lifts for the airline industry as well. One of the first Canadian customers was Air Atlantic, a regional operator based in Newfoundland which bought 15 lifts in 1995. Air Atlantic was later taken over by Canadian Airlines, which was itself merged with Air Canada. American carriers including Delta and Continental Express were impressed enough to buy the lifts too. The company has also racked up sales in the UK.

But it's not just the transportation industry that needs wheelchair lifts. Schools, churches, public arenas and conference centres often need to provide wheelchair access for students, participants and visitors. That's where Adaptive Engineering's Mobilift CX comes in. It's made of aluminum and stainless steel and since it weighs only 268 pounds, it can be transported in the back of a pickup truck and can be moved easily from one location to another. This is useful in schools, for example where one day the lift might be needed to access the stage in the auditorium and on another, to provide access to the bleachers at the side of the football field. The Mobilift CX doesn't require a power source, is manually operated and requires very little maintenance.

Terry Clarke is the General Manager in the firm these days. He tells Accessible News that the Mobilift CX is used at the Superbowl every year and is also in use on the NASCAR circuit. In Canada, there is also a growing interest in the device. Sales in of the Mobilift CX have recently increased in Ontario and the development and launch of standards around of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act may influence more organizations to buy the lifts. "Some school boards have a lift that can be taken to a place where an event will be held. That way, many schools in

the area can make use of a single wheelchair lift", said Clarke. In addition to its portability, price also makes the Mobilift CX an attractive option. "It's an affordable option – much less expensive than installing an elevator."

For those interested in learning more about Adaptive Engineering's lifts or the mainstream products they also supply to the transportation industry such as steps for boarding and de-boarding aircraft, please visit the company's web site at: **www.adaptivelifts.com** , write to them at (email:) **info@adaptivelifts.com** (postal:) Adaptive Engineering Inc., 419 34th Ave. SE Calgary AB T2G 1V1 or call them at 403-243-9400, Toll Free: 1-800-448-4652, Fax: 403-243-9455.

Rick Sinclair
- by Deb. Finn

There are many people across Canada and around the world who had the pleasure at one time or another of working with Rick Sinclair. His humour and intelligence were undoubted, as was his knowledge of accommodation best practices for people with hearing disabilities. His willingness to share his knowledge and his passion for ensuring people who were Deaf, deafened or hard of hearing had the communications tools to help them live their lives on an equal footing with everyone else made Rick very much the "go-to" guy in his field.

Rick was an accessibility consultant by trade, and a mentor by inclination, to many including myself. He was also not only my friend, but a friend to many other people in the disability community and the assistive technology industry. This group included more than a few who knew him on-line but had not yet had the pleasure of meeting him in person.

The first few phone conversations I had with Rick required the intervention of a Bell Relay operator. I had never used Relay before and for a beginner, the system can be a bit awkward; at least that's what people have told me. But I was talking to Rick Sinclair, a man who seemed to have been specially made to put people at their ease. So talking through a Relay operator was comfortable – once I got over the tendency to phrase my end of the conversation in instructions to the operator like "Ask him how things are going" instead of simply saying "G'day Rick. How's it going?" Then Rick brought me the first version of TEXTEL and installed it on my office computer. TEXTEL was Rick's baby, an internal modem card that enabled my Windows 3.X computer to talk to other TEXTEL-equipped computers or even old, slow 5-bit TTYs, using my phone line but without the third-party intervention of a Relay operator. Suddenly, this guy who was fun and easy to chat with was really and I must emphasise that word: REALLY fun and easy to chat with!

Those of us who have known Rick and his fantastic wife Karen, know how much the man loved Scotland. One of my fondest memories is of the Sinclairs dropping by my office with a box of Tim Horton's doughnuts to see photos of a recent holiday I had taken in the Scottish Highlands and the Isle of Skye. We laughed, swapped stories, drank coffee and ate doughnuts, thoroughly enjoying the shared pleasure of it all. What a great memory to have of someone!

I'm sad to say that Rick died suddenly on June 30. It seems hard to believe that this could have happened to such a lively and likeable man, but it did. There's an old Scottish song that asks "Will ye no come back again?" Perhaps not. But as long as his friends continue to remember him and all that he shared with us, Rick Sinclair will never really be completely gone.

[Editor's note: Karen Sinclair will continue to run Sinclair, Nicholson and Associates, the consulting company she founded with Rick. You can find the company on the web at: **www.snaconsulting.ca** , at 377 Pickford Dr., Kanata, Ont., K2L 3P3, Voice: (613) 599-1284, TTY: (613) 599-1246, or by email at: **karen@snaconsulting.ca** .]

ATRC Gets New Name, Moves from UofT

On August 1, the Adaptive Technology Resource Centre (ATRC) at the University of Toronto got a new name and a new home. It has been reconstituted as the Inclusive Design Research Centre (IDRC: **http://idrc.ocad.ca/**) and the Inclusive Design Institute and its new home is the OCAD University, formerly the Ontario College of Art and Design, "Canada's university of the imagination".

The Centre and Institute's mission will continue to be the inclusive design of emerging information and communication systems and practices. All of the ATRC's ongoing projects and services have been moved to the new organization and the University of Toronto will be an ongoing research partner in the Inclusive Design Institute. ATRC's long-standing collaboration with researchers from across the University of Toronto will continue.

OCAD has the agility, energy, imagination and innovative thinking that will enable IDRC to thrive and realize its inclusive learning and research vision. IDRC's new home has fully embraced inclusive design and made it an academic priority. IDRC will be building an academic program in inclusive design at the undergraduate, graduate and professional development level. In addition to a venerable and rich history in art and design, OCAD includes programs such as the Digital Futures Initiative that perfectly complement IDRC's work and offer a vibrant, expanding academic community to situate the new organization's research.

New Products or Services

Since the last issue of Accessible News, a number of Canadian companies have announced the launch of new products, new versions of existing products or launched new Web sites. Here's a brief summary. The companies have been presented in alphabetical order.

Aroga (**www.aroga.com**) is the distributor of a new braille display for the iPhone. Called the BraillePen12, an external Bluetooth braille display that is available for the iPhone 4 and the iPhone 3 GS with OS 4 upgrade. The BraillePen 12 has both a braille keyboard for input and a 12 cell braille display. It supports MobileSpeak, Talks, Pocket Hal, Dolphin Pen, Supernova and Windows Mobile, as well as Windows versions XP, Vista and Windows 7. In addition to this, Aroga now has available Dragon NaturallySpeaking 11 from Dragon, the premier voice recognition software and ReacTickles 2, the learning software from Sherston America that's specifically designed for early learners and those on the autistic spectrum. Contact Aroga for more information on these and the other innovative products they carry.

Karlen Communications (**www.karlencommunications.com**) has a blog for Microsoft Office accessibility using the keyboard and accessible document design: **www.karlencommunications.com/Blog** . There is a new resource document in tagged PDF on how you can use Word 2007 or Word 2010 to create your own Style Set for documents to make them easier to read. A Style Set can have a specific font, font size and colour depending on your preference. The Style Set is easy to create and can be copied from one computer to another. There is also a link to the document from either the Microsoft Office 2007 Accessibility or the Microsoft Office 2010 Accessibility page from Karlen's web page. For more information, contact Karlen Communications at 64 West River Street, Paris, Ont. N3L 2V1, tel.: 1-519-442-2856, email: **info@karlencommunications.com** .

Upcoming Conferences in Canada

Here's what's happening in Canada between September 15 and December 31, 2010:

September 17 - 18, 2010
ACCESS 2010 - Your Key to Independence
Kitchener, Ontario
Contact: Independent Living Centre of Waterloo Region
WWW: **www.ilcwr.org/access2010/**

September 28, 2010
Business Takes Action Annual Conference, "Minding What Matters"
Toronto, Ontario
WWW: **www.businesstakesaction.ca/**

September 30 - October 1, 2010
Tourette Syndrome Foundation of Canada National Conference
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Contact: Tourette Syndrome Foundation of Canada
Tel: 905-673-2255
E-mail: **tsfc@tourette.ca**
WWW: **www.tourette.ca**

September 30-October 2, 2010
Annual Conference of the Brain Injury Association of Canada and Brain Trust of Saskatchewan Health
Regina, Saskatchewan
Contact: Harry Zarins
155 Queen Street
Suite 808
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L1
Tel: 866-977-2492
E-mail: **info@biac-aclc.ca**
WWW: **biac-aclc.ca/en/2009/12/02/2010-biac-conference-call-for-abstracts/**

October 18-19, 2010
Strategies for Inclusive Employment Supporting Changing Labour Market Trends: Real Issues Real Solutions
Toronto, Ontario
Contact: Monica Winkler, Senior Administrator
The Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work
One Yonge Street, Suite 1202
Toronto, ON M5E 1E5
Tel: 416 260 3060 X 227
FAX: 416 260 3093
E-mail: **conference@ccrw.org**
WWW: **www.ccrw.org/conference**

October 28-30, 2010
4th National Spinal Cord Injury Conference
Niagara Falls, Ontario
Contact: Conference Services
Toronto Rehab
439 University Avenue, 5th floor

Toronto, ON M5G 1Y8
Tel: 1-416-597-3422, ext. 3693
E-mail: **conferences@torontorehab.on.ca**
WWW: **www.sciconference.ca**

November 12 - 14, 2010
"Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow" - 2010 national conference of the National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS)
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Contact: NEADS RM. 426, Unicentre
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario, K1S 5B6
E-mail: **conference2010@neads.ca**
WWW: **www.neads.ca/en/about/events/conference2010/**

November 17-19, 2010
21st Pacific Coast Brain Injury Conference
Vancouver, British Columbia
Contact: Kaitlin Beca
Pacific Brain Injury Conference
c/o Sea to Sky Meeting Management
206-201 Bewicke Avenue
North Vancouver, BC V3M 3M7
Tel: 1-604-984-6448
FAX: 1-604-984-6434
E-mail: **info@pcbic.org**
WWW: **www.pcbic.org**

November 26-27, 2010
2nd Conference on Positive Aging - An Interdisciplinary Team Approach for Health Professionals
Vancouver, BC
Tel: (604) 822 - 7524
Fax: (604) 822 - 4835
E-mail: **ipad@interchange.ubc.ca**
WWW:
www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/Brochures/AdvNot_PositiveAging%202010.pdf

News Bits

As of June 30, HumanWare (**www.humanware.com**) has a new address for its Toronto office: 3660 Midland Avenue, Suite 340 Scarborough, Ontario M1V 0B8. The telephone number for this new location will stay the same. You can still reach

them at 1-888-723-7273.

Scooters are becoming an increasingly popular choice for people in need of powered mobility. Unfortunately, existing accessibility standards are based on the space needs of manual wheelchair users and limit the use of larger powered mobility devices such as scooters. Existing standards must be updated if we are to accommodate the needs of scooter users, since we can assume that scooter users are only able to walk short distances and should not be expected to leave their scooters and belongings unattended in public places. Now a team of researchers from Toronto Rehabilitation Institute (**www.torontorehab.com**) has determined the minimum dimensions needed to allow five models of powered mobility scooters to manoeuvre within five commonly encountered indoor spatial configurations. One of the team's findings was that the turning circle for a scooter, analogous to the existing 1.5m turning circle which is designed to accommodate manual wheelchairs, would be unreasonably large. To provide a more space-efficient alternative, the team determined the optimal shapes of rectangular spaces that would allow a scooter to enter the space, perform a three point turn and exit facing forwards. The study's findings will be published shortly and have contributed to recommendations for new standards for built environments that can accommodate scooter users in Ontario.

Karen McCall of Karlen Communications (**www.karlencommunications.com**) has been awarded the Microsoft MVP/Most Valued Professional Award for the second year in a row for Microsoft Word.

If you are an Ontario-based professional with an interest in providing or promoting accessibility in built environments, technical service provision, training and event facilities and web access, check out the Accessibility Consultants Association of Ontario (ACAOntario) . The Association is growing by leaps and bounds, providing a resource for Ontario consultants who want to add to their team for an RFP, or to solicit support for issues related to the Ontario AODA. It has proven quite successful in team building. The ACAOntario web site includes listings of member companies, arranged by type of business such as Architectural, Technology, Web Design and others. The site also offers a Members' Forum. Visit **www.acaontario.ca** to find out more.

Cordless phones meeting the requirements of the Washington D.C-based Telecommunications Industry Association's TIA-1083 standard are now available in Canada. The standard was developed to improve cordless phone use for hearing aid wearers. Phones meeting the TIA-1083 standard reduce the incidence of interference problems experienced by some people using hearing aids. Companies such as Panasonic Canada (**www.panasonic.ca**) have been licenced to manufacture and sell telephone products that meet the standard. Look for the TIA-1083-compliant logo on the product package. For more information about the standard, contact Information Handling Services at 1-800-854-7179 or visit **http://global.ihs.com** .

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **www.at-links.gc.ca/as**. At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from Us

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Deb Finn
Industry Canada
300 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0C8

tel: 613-990-4297
fax: 613-957-4076
TTY: 613-998-5923
email: **deb.finn@ic.gc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

ACCESSIBLE NEWS Nº 42

IN THE MATTER OF DONNA JODHAN v. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF CANADA

[source: Federal Court decision, dated: November 29, 2010]

Summary: The Applicant seeks a declaration that the federal government breached her right to equal treatment under section 15(1) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, either by creating inadequate Internet accessibility standards for the visually impaired or by failing to implement existing standards. Upon review, the Court finds that the government has not implemented existing accessibility standards and that some of the standards are obsolete. The Court concludes that this is a violation of section 15(1) of the Charter, since it discriminates against the applicant and other visually impaired persons, and notes that the Respondent did not plead a Charter section 1 justification defence. It is declared that the government has a constitutional obligation to bring itself into compliance with the Charter within a reasonable time period, which the Court sets at 15 months.

More and better captioning is coming to Canadian movie theatres

The analogue to digital transition has hit Canadian cinemas as they upgrade their 35mm projection technology to digital, was the consensus of the Digital Cinema Working Group, DCWG, an international body of experts in captioning, manufacturing and Canadian cinema. Snookie Lomow, National Executive Director of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA: **www.chha.ca**) and Chair of the working group stated, "we encourage all hard of hearing Canadians to try to go and see captioned movies again because we need to demonstrate a strong desire for accessible cinema, which in turn will encourage cinema owners across Canada to upgrade their systems".

Adina Lebo Executive Director Motion Picture Theatre Associations of Canada (**www.mptac.ca/provincial-associations-en.php**) said, "the age of digital movie projection has brought about a number of exciting technological advancements for movie lovers everywhere, including new captioning technology for the hard of hearing. Movie theatres look forward to installing new captioning equipment across

Canada to augment the existing equipment and to provide a state-of-the-art experience to patrons who are hard of hearing."

CHHA is also developing a web page dedicated to listings for captioned cinema in theatres across the country.

Mainstream Companies Find New Product Uses at Toronto Rehab Facility

Toronto Rehab has been working with mainstream companies to build a new research facility that will be anything but ordinary. An underground laboratory with a moveable ice floor for experiments is just one of the features of iDAPT (Intelligent Design for Adaptation, Participation and Technology), which will be one of the world's most advanced networks of rehabilitation research and development facilities when fully completed in 2011. Scientists will use the underground lab to study older people and those with disabilities as they encounter real-life challenges in a safe experimental setting. The goal: to develop practical solutions that help people live as fully and independently as possible.

To build this ice floor, Toronto Rehab went to CIMCO Refrigeration (**www.cimcorefrigeration.com**), just one of many Canadian companies that have created extraordinary components for the lab located beneath Toronto Rehab's University Centre. A drawbridge, overhead robot safety harness and 3D motion sensors are some of the elements produced by other companies.

Central to the whole approach for iDAPT's labs are several large chambers (or payloads) that provide different settings for researchers to study interactions between people and their environment. The chambers will be lifted on and off a motion simulator that can produce a range of motions like rolling, accelerating or pitching up and down and different sights and sounds. For this to work, the chambers must weigh less than 10 tonnes and yet be sufficiently strong and soundproof for experiments.

Composotech Structures (**www.composotech.com**) of Goderich, Ont. embraced the challenge of building several chambers. Composotech used advanced composite materials and construction techniques to produce lightweight structures that can safely withstand complex motion forces. The company drew on more than a decade of experience producing simulation environments for the aerospace, military and education sectors.

The "ice chamber" will be able to generate winter-like conditions, complete with sub-zero temperatures. Equipping it with ice and snow has been the task of CIMCO, which is the official ice rink supplier for the NHL and also North America's largest refrigeration contractor. Despite almost a century in the business, the job of

producing ice, snow and wind for an ice chamber to be placed on Toronto Rehab's motion simulator is a unique project for the Toronto-based company.

"It's an interesting challenge to create an ice floor that is moveable," says David Sinclair, Branch Manager, CIMCO Toronto. To make the ice itself, cold fluid will be pumped in through piping on the floor. But things get trickier when the chamber begins to roll and tilt as part of experiments onboard the simulator.

"Imagine an ice cube in an ice cube tray. It's okay to move that tray around and upside down, but as soon as you put any torque or flex to it, that's when the ice pops out," says Sinclair. But engineers have found a way to keep the ice anchored using a series of clips, around which the ice will form. CIMCO also has the job of providing snow-making equipment for the ice chamber. For this, they are using a small version of the big snow machines used on ski hills.

The beauty of Toronto Rehab's underground lab, known as the Challenging Environment Assessment Laboratory (CEAL), is that conditions will be safely controlled for study participants and scientists alike. Quanser Inc. (**www.quanser.com**) a consulting firm headquartered in Markham, Ont., has designed highly advanced software to control the simulator, integrate all instruments and assure the safety of everyone in the environment.

Key to safety is an overhead robotic safety system, designed by another Toronto firm, Nuspark Inc. (**www.nuspark.com**). Anyone taking part in a research study will be strapped into a body harness connected to an overhead robot that will move with them as they go about their tasks. A pulley mechanism, like a seatbelt, will tighten immediately, but gently, to prevent injury in the event of a fall.

How to get study participants on and off the motion simulator? Pure Ingenuity (**www.pureingenuity.com**), a Kingston-based company, is making a drawbridge that will carry study participants in and out of the simulator. The bridge is collapsible so that it is not in the way when the simulator is moving.

A-Tech Instruments Ltd. (**www.a-tech.ca**) of Toronto is making large but super-light force plates across which study participants will walk. These plates will help scientists understand mobility by measuring forces between people and the floor, and the position of those forces.

To measure and analyse people's motion in 3D, scientists will use sophisticated motion-tracking technology developed by PhoeniX Technologies Inc. (**www.ptiphoenix.com**), headquartered in Burnaby, B.C.

"Creating this amazing research space has been a complex endeavour," says Dr. Geoff Fernie, Vice President, Research, Toronto Rehab, "and it's certainly thrown a

few curves our way. We've been fortunate to draw on the expertise of so many Canadian companies."

For some companies, the project has opened up new areas in which to apply their expertise. Adds David Sinclair of CIMCO: "It's satisfying to be providing researchers with an environment they can use for studies that will benefit many people."

Built in collaboration with the University of Toronto, iDAPT is a $36-million initiative that has come into being thanks to contributions from the Canada Foundation for Innovation, the Ontario Innovation Trust, Ontario Ministry of Research and Innovation, Toronto Rehab Foundation and its corporate partners. For more on iDAPT, visit **www.torontorehab.com** .

Analysis and Research in Communications Inc. announces name change

Toronto-based Mediac Inc. has changed its name to Analysis and Research in Communications Inc. (ARC: **www.ARCresearch.ca**). The change was made to reflect the company's decision to expand the services it provides to clients with respect to Canadian broadcasting. The ARC brand integrates the company's empirical and policy research services.

"Canadian broadcasting faces major policy reviews over the next twelve months," said Beverley Milligan, President and CEO of ARC. "Studies about the impact of vertical integration on broadcasting have already been scheduled by the House of Commons Canadian Heritage Committee and the CRTC, while major licence renewals and the precedent-setting Bell-CTV ownership transaction are on the horizon. ARC is well-placed to provide its clients with invaluable evidence about these issues, through real-time content analysis and quantitative research studies."

ARC's current projects include Monitor 2, an empirical study measuring the quantity and quality of captioned and described television programming aired by Canadian broadcasters. Undertaken on behalf of Media Access Canada Inc. and in partnership with Ryerson University and Industry Canada, this two-year study builds on the first, ground-breaking Monitor study undertaken in 1992. "ARC will not only quantify the volume of closed-captioned and described video content, but will measure its quality in terms of the standards now being developed by industry and governmental working groups," said Milligan.

"Empirical measurement is the best tool for establishing regulatory compliance," added Milligan. "ARC's software, specialized equipment and trained research associates enable us to measure virtually any aspect of broadcasting content,

including levels of information programming, the portrayal of different demographic groups, and compliance with CRTC regulatory requirements."

ARC's services now also include quantitative research about ownership and financial performance in Canadian broadcasting, as well as historical research about regulatory and legislative developments in broadcasting and telecommunications over the past century.

For more information, contact Beverley Milligan, President & CEO of ARC at 416-488-9521 or email her at **bmilligan@arcresearch.ca** .

New Products or Services

Since the last issue of Accessible News, a number of Canadian companies have announced the launch of new products, new versions of existing products or launched new Web sites. Here's a brief summary. The companies have been presented in alphabetical order.

Vancouver's Aroga (**www.aroga.com**) has informed Accessible News that they are now shipping the Braille Sense OnHand, the smallest and lightest notetaker, which also has a built-in digital compass and GPS receiver for way-finding and orientation. Other items carried by Aroga include the Transformer, Enhanced Vision's flexible, ultra portable electronic magnifier that connects to your computer via USB and both the Braille Pen and Braille Pen 12. Connect to your phone, netbook, PC or PDA, write SMS, do 6-key entry into your favourite Braille translator, or simply type with this new Bluetooth Braille Keyboard and 12-cell display. For more information about these products, please visit Aroga's web site.

Ottawa-based web accessibility specialists Further Ahead (**http://furtherahead.com**) have re-launched "Simply Accessible" (**http://simplyaccessible.com**), , an online resource focussed on accessibility for web sites, applications and in the mobile world. Recent articles include:
- WCAG 2.0: Beyond Web Content (**http://simplyaccessible.com/article/wcag2-beyond-web-content/**);
- Speed vs Accessibility (**http://simplyaccessible.com/article/speed-vs-accessibility/**); and
- Custom Styles for iOS (**http://simplyaccessible.com/article/custom-styles-for-ios/**)

Further Ahead have also launched their virtual seminar series focussed on accessibility. There will be a mixture of live and pre-recorded classes that take a detailed look at the topics you need to know to make your web sites and applications accessible. The first seminar "In Top Form: Designing and Building Accessible

Forms" was delivered live on December 9th, 2010. The next live virtual seminar is called "The Truth About JavaScript and Accessibility" and is scheduled for January 2011. For all the details see **http://store.furtherahead.com** .

HumanWare (**www.humanware.ca**) announced the arrival of SmartView 360, the electronic magnifier that provides a clear view in all directions. The company, headquartered in Drummondville, Quebec, has also announced an extension to the Apex family of products, the VoiceNote Apex, which is a practical, portable and affordable productivity tool designed for users who are blind and are accustomed to using speech output. Visit HumanWare's web site for more information.

Surrey, B.C.'s Insight Media Centre Ltd. (**www.insightmediacentre.com**) is now a distributor for Attainment's new "Go Talk Express 32", with the ability to play up to eight messages in sequence, and the "Imagine Symbol Set" DVD / Book with PDF (3600 symbols and Realistic Pictures); a range of iPad Accessories for Inclusion, including iPad speakers which can increase volume about 200%, allowing an iPad to function as an AAC device, iPad Super Switch - Cordless, iPad Stand / Mounting Systems, Carry Cases and iScan MP Interface; and Ablenet's newly introduced products, including Impulse, an EMG (Electromyography) sensing electrode that senses tiny muscle contractions and the Jive! Communicator, a handheld, lightweight and portable device that provides comprehensive message building capabilities, PCS Symbols, character, word, and sentence prediction. For more information, visit Insight Media Centre's web site, email them at **info@insightmediacentre.com** , call them at 1-888-541-7772 or 604-581-2420 or fax them at 604-581-2430.

Assistive Technology Support Initiative
- Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation (OCRI)

A variety of computer-based assistive technologies (AT) are being used successfully within the education system to support the learning process. As is the case with any new process or software, however, there is a significant learning curve for new users of these tools. Through an innovative combination of trained volunteers and online resources, the Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation's (OCRI) Assistive Technology Support Initiative (ATSI) aims to enhance the school-based support given to students as they begin to use assistive technologies, so they can reap the benefits of these tools as quickly as possible.

ATSI recognizes that students, teachers and parents are partners in the learning process, and that trained volunteers can be an important source of added support in the classroom. As a result, the project includes a customized component for each of these audiences:

– A series of student-focused videos, accessible through an interactive website to help students better understand what AT can do for them;

– Training and online resource materials to help increase the awareness and understanding of AT by parents/guardians, so they can support their child's learning;

– Online interactive learning materials, including videos, to supplement teacher training;

– Online resources and in-person workshops to train local volunteers so they can be matched with teachers and students through OCRI's Volunteers in Education program.

The ultimate goal of ATSI is to achieve synergy with the formal education system in order to enhance the academic success of students using computer-based AT for their school work. The website and multi-media resources being developed as part of this project are fully accessible and bilingual.

OCRI is working with Ottawa area school boards and post-secondary institutions, as well as local, provincial and national learning disabilities associations and other AT subject matter experts to develop and implement this multi-faceted project. The commitment, expertise and resources shared by all our partners are greatly appreciated:

– Algonquin College Centre for Students with Disabilities

– Carleton University Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities

– Inclusive Design Research Centre (the former Adaptive Technology Resource Centre which has moved from University of Toronto to the OCAD University)

– Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est

– Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario

– Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

– Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

– Learning Disabilities Association of Ottawa-Carleton

– Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

– Ottawa Catholic School Board

– Université d'Ottawa/University of Ottawa SASS

OCRI's Volunteers in Education Program welcomes collaborations with other agencies interested in helping users of computer based assistive technology.

In addition to the valuable in-kind contributions from our partners, this project is made possible by financial support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Inukshuk Fund, the Cowan Foundation and Université d'Ottawa/University of Ottawa.

The Assistive Technology Support Initiative has local, provincial as well as national scope. School boards, post-secondary institutions, libraries, and other agencies, as well as the community at large, will have free access to bilingual AT training and resource materials via an interactive website (under Creative Commons licensing). Students from elementary schools through to post-secondary institutions will be empowered with direct access to additional training and resources that will help them learn to effectively apply AT in their reading, writing and assignments. By also providing information and resources for teachers and parents, ATSI will help to level the playing field for students of all ages with language-related learning challenges.

The content being developed as part of the project includes a series of interactive online tutorial modules for educators. Some universities have indicated an interest in using this material in the development of a larger AT module that will be used for training teachers, which will further extend the impact of this work.

In collaboration with our partners, OCRI will be promoting the completed ATSI website and resources broadly, so that as many students, parents/guardians and educators as possible will benefit.

Contact: Lee-Ann Scott, Manager of Volunteers in Education, **OCRI lscott@ocri.ca** • 613-828-6274 • **www.ocri.ca/AT**

Upcoming Conferences in Canada

Here's what's happening in Canada between January 1 and March 31, 2011:

February 4, 2011
Mild Traumatic Brain Injury: Challenges and Controversies in Research
Toronto, Ontario
Contact: Toronto Rehab
Toronto Rehabilitation Institute
439 University Ave
5th Floor, Room 118
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1Y8
WWW: **www.torontorehab.com/mild-braininjury-registration**

February 25, 2011
2011 Inaugural Geriatrics Symposium Report Card on Elder Care: Making the Grade
Toronto, Ontario
Contact: Toronto Rehab
Toronto Rehabilitation Institute
439 University Ave
5th Floor, Room 118
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1Y8
WWW: **www.torontorehab.com/geriatrics-symposium-registration**

News Bits

ATTENTION JAWS USERS: JAWS 12 (released in October) and Frontier Computing has the following advice for you: If you are receiving JAWS 12 as the final installment of your Software Maintenance Agreement (SMA) we look forward to helping you renew your SMA. To continue receiving future JAWS upgrades at the specially discounted price, which is offered only to current SMA holders, you must renew your SMA by Dec 31, 2010. Frontier Computing's sales team is ready to assist you to renew your SMA or to answer any questions you may have regarding the current status of your SMA. Dial 416-489-6690 / 1-888-480-0000 or email **sales@frontiercomputing.on.ca** .

January 4, 2011 is World Braille Day, which marks the birth of Louis Braille, the inventor of the system used around the world and available in over 70 languages. To learn more, including a brief biography of Louis Braille visit **www.cnib.ca/en/living/braille/louis-braille/** .

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **www.at-links.gc.ca/as/**. At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from Us

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Deb Finn
Industry Canada
300 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0C8

tel: 613-990-4297
fax: 613-957-4076

TTY: 613-998-5923
email: **deb.finn@ic.gc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

Industry Canada Industrie Canada

Sector Office: Assistive Devices Industry

Spring 2011

SEP 06 2011
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

ACCESSIBLE NEWS N° 43

Gallaudet University Honours for Gary Malkowski

On May 13, Gary Malkowski, the Special Advisor to the President, Public Affairs at the Canadian Hearing Society (**www.chs.ca**) was the keynote speaker at Gallaudet University's 142nd Commencement, as well as the recipient of an honourary degree, L.H.D. Doctor of Humane Letters. Gallaudet President T. Alan Hurwitz announced these honours in March, stating that Mr. Malknowski was chosen in recognition of his extensive work on issues of critical importance to the Deaf community and for his devoted services in advancing student rights and work in rehabilitation.

Gary Malkowski became the first elected Deaf Member of Ontario's Provincial Parliament. Serving as Parliamentary Assistant and on many Standing Committees, Gary introduced a Private Member's bill leading to the introduction and implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act of 2005. He is the recipient of numerous awards throughout his career including the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal in recognition of his community service, Ontario Liberal Government Community Action Award, the Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Program's Outstanding Contribution to Mental Health Communities Award. Gary has been with CHS for 20 years, his legacy for accessibility is recognized internationally.

Introducing the Morris (Mickey) Milner Award

HTX, Ontario's Health Technology Exchange, has created an award in the name of one of the founding members of the organization, Dr. Morris (Mickey) Milner, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the organization, R&D and commercialization in the Medical and Assistive Technologies (MAT) sector.

The award is presented annually to an Ontario-based company or individual who has provided a significant contribution in the area of Assistive Technology and Home Healthcare. The award of $10,000 will be used to:

Advance their research agenda;
Address Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care priorities to improve aids to daily living;
Lead and foster strategic alliance and collaborative research activities among academics, health practitioners and decision makers;
Demonstrate return on investment;

Enhance research training;
Fill critical research talent gaps; and,
Foster knowledge dissemination and knowledge transfer.

To be eligible for the award, nominees must meet the following criteria:

Must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident residing in Ontario;
Must have made a significant contribution to science or medicine;
Research conducted must have resulted in a significant advancement in scientific knowledge, prevention and/or treatment in the area of Assistive Technologies or Home Healthcare; and
Research findings must have been published in refereed journals.

The application deadline is August 31, 2011 and more information can be found on the HTX website as: **www.htx.ca/opportunities.aspx** .

Communication Access for People who have Speech and/or Language Disabilities
- Courtesy of Barbara Collier, Executive Director, Augmentative Communication Community Partnerships - Canada

Augmentative Communication Community Partnerships Canada (ACCPC: **www.accpc.ca**) is pleased to announce a new website on communication accessibility for people who have speech and/or language disabilities: **www.communication-access.org** . The project is funded in part by the Government of Canada's Social Development Partnerships Program - Disability Component.

The website is about what organizations can do to make their goods and services accessible to people who have speech and/or language disabilities. It is based on extensive research and is grounded in national and international human rights legislation.

The Education Centre on the site has video clips and practical suggestions about:

People who have communication disabilities;
How to start up a conversation;
Communicating with people who have speech and/or language disabilities;
How to support a person understanding what you are saying;
Accessible meetings and public events;
Communicating over the telephone;
Providing accessible print, text and e-communications; and
Creating accessible forms and other writing supports.

Promote communication accessibility in your organization by using the resource to educate staff in your organization and by linking your website to the resource.

Tell us what you think using the online surveys or contact us at: **accpc@sympatico.ca** .

FICCDAT Roundup
- by Mary Frances Laughton

FICCDAT, the Festival of International Conferences on Caregiving, Disability, Aging and Technology took place in Toronto from June 3-8, 2011. Over 1200 people from more than 35 countries participated in some aspect of this event. Six conferences ran programmes under the Festival umbrella. There was one exhibition area with nearly 100 booths from all over North America. The social programme included an opening reception with the Honourable David Onley, Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, as guest speaker, together with a balloon artist and a mime, the opening plenary featuring Donna Thomson as the keynote speaker and a banquet with a number of artists with disabilities or relating to caregiving as the entertainment.

FICCDAT was co-hosted by March of Dimes Canada and the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute. The primary sponsorship came from the Ontario Government and the Trillium Foundation. Information on the papers, the activities and the exhibition can be found at **www.ficcdat.ca** .

New Products or Services

Since the last issue of Accessible News, a number of Canadian companies have announced the launch of new products, new versions of existing products or launched new Web sites. Here's a brief summary. The companies have been presented in alphabetical order:

Access (SCS) Consulting Services (**www.access-scs-consulting.com**) offers free webinars for Ontarians to learn the AODA, customer service and best practices in information and communication. They are in English and French with downloadable transcripts.

Accessible Media Inc. (AMI) is a not-for-profit multimedia organization operating two broadcast services, VoicePrint and The Accessible Channel – TACtv, and a companion website (**www.ami.ca**). AMI serves more than five million Canadians who are blind, deaf, vision, hearing or mobility impaired, learning disabled, print-restricted or learning English as a second language by making print, broadcast andonline media accessible.

The Canadian Foundation for Animal Assisted Support Services (**www.cf4aass.org**) launched its new website in March. The Foundation's goal is "to be the philanthropic leader that sustains the innovation, coordination, and integration of Animal-Assisted Support Services within Canada's health-care, social service, and justice sectors."

HumanWare (**www.humanware.ca**) has introduced the Victor Reader Stratus, a new family of desktop DAISY CD players that will replace the popular Victor Reader ClassicX line. Compared to its predecessor, the VR ClassicX, the VR Stratus comes with a new look enclosure that is smaller and lighter on the outside yet smarter and better sounding on the inside. Gerry Chevalier, Victor Reader Brand Manager, said "the basic Stratus model plays only CDs but there is also an advanced multimedia model that will also play SD cards, USB flash drives, and it includes Acapela text-to-speech. And that's not all, says Chevalier. We have given the Stratus a smart new look, improved the quality of the audio, improved the battery system, added a talking clock, and now every Stratus can play data DVDs in addition to CDs."

Upcoming Conferences in Canada

Here's what's happening in Canada between July 1 and September 30, 2011:

September 14-16, 2011
2011 CARN/ACHR Conference Chronicity and Complexity: Best Practices to Meet the Challenges in Nursing Rehab
Laval, Quebec
Tel: 416-597-3422, ext. 3693
E-mail: **conferences@torontorehab.on.ca**
WWW: **https://event-wizard.com/2011CARN-ACIIR/0/welcome/**

News Bits

OCAD University is launching a new Master program in Inclusive Design. Details can be found at: **www.ocad.ca/programs/graduate_studies/inclusive_design.htm** . OCAD's Inclusive Design Research Centre, in partnership with the Martin Prosperity Institute and the Adaptech Research Network, received funding to generate a report that outlines the pivotal role Canada can play in digital inclusion globally and how inclusive design can be an economic driver in our economy. The paper can be found at: **http://idrc.ocad.ca/index.php/about-the-idrc/idrc-news/452-leveraging-inclusion-and-diversity-as-canadas-digital-advantage** .

Our Web Site

Our Web site can be found at **www.at-links.gc.ca/as/**. At this site are all our old newsletters as well as different listings and links to other sites of interest. Should you be using these old newsletters, please bear in mind that the web addresses were correct when the newsletter was created but that they may not be accurate now. We do not plan to change the back issues of the newsletters.

Communications from Us

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter on disk or by e-mail, please contact us at the address below.

Where to Find Us

For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact:

Deb Finn
Industry Canada
300 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0C8

tel: 613-990-4297
fax: 613-957-4076
TTY: 613-998-5923
email: **deb.finn@ic.gc.ca**

Aussi disponible en français.

2300